‘I sound so posh compared to you lot’

PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION AND CHANGE IN THE SURREY ACCENT

Christine Melve Ellingsæter

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Department of Foreign Languages
University of Bergen

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Contents

Abstract

Denne oppgaven tar for seg språkendringer i sør-øst England, nærmere bestemt Surrey. Oppgaven har fokusert på fem fonologiske variabler, hvorav fire variabler er på segmentalt nivå mens den femte er på suprasegmentalt nivå.

Til tross for at det finnes mange studier som omhandler språkendringeri sør-øst England, finnes det få studier som har studert talemålet i Surrey nøye og systematisk fra et sosiolingvistisk ståsted. Målet med denne oppgaven har derfor vært å undersøke talemålet i Surrey mer systematisk for å kunne gi et bilde av talemålssituasjonen der. Oppgaven har sett på hvordan språkendringene kan relateres til de sosiale variablene alder og kjønn. Dette ble gjort ved å intervjue fire unge kvinner, fire unge menn, fire eldre kvinner, og fire eldre menn. I tillegg ble informantene bedt om å lese en liste med setninger, og en tekst som inneholdt relevante ord for de fonologiske variablene. Informantene er delt inn i to aldersgrupper; yngre informanter og eldre informanter.

Oppgaven har underøkt hvor talemålet i Surrey befinner seg mellom RP og Cockney. En av hypotesene er at Surrey befinner seg mellom Near-RP og Estuary English. Den geografiske plasseringen av Surrey tilsier at Estuary English vil være det gjeldende talemålet. Surrey er imidlertid et velstående område, og det vil derfor ikke være urimelig at mange har et talemål i retning av Near-RP. Oppgaven har derfor forsøkt å finne ut hvilket talemål som er gjeldende i Surrey.

I tillegg til å kartlegge talemålssituasjonen i Surrey har oppgaven forsøkt å gi et inntrykk av hvordan språkendringene i Surrey kan relateres til dialektnivelleringen i sør-øst England. Den geografiske, så vel som sosiale, plasseringen av Surrey gjør Surrey til et idéelt område for taleakkomodasjon og dialektnivellering. En stor del av innbyggerne i Surrey pendler til London, hvor de møter flere forskjellige dialekter på daglig basis. Som en konsekvens av dette er det naturlig at dialekter nivelleres. Surrey har rykte på seg for å være et ganske velstående område, og det kan derfor antas at dialekten er noe mer konservativ enn i resten av England. Dette gjør det ekstra interessant å undersøke Surreys posisjon i forhold til dialektnivellering.

Resultatene viser at talemålet i Surrey utvikler seg på lik linje med andre dialekter i sør-øst England, bortsett fra utviklingen av R-fronting hvor resultatene viser at R-fronting strengt tatt ikke kan sies å ha spredd seg til Surrey. Et av hovedfunnene i oppgaven er utviklingen av Yod-coalescence, hvor resultatene for Yod-coalescence er så høye at endringen kan sies å snart være fullført. Språkendringene ser imidlertid ut til å gå noe langsommere i Surrey enn i resten av sør-øst England. En av grunnene til dette kan være at Surrey er et velstående område, og at innbyggerene føler seg presset til å stå imot stigmatiserte språktrekk.

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List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

General abbreviations

RP	Received Pronunciation
UK	United Kingdom
SED	Survey of English Dialects
NSD	Norwegian Social Science Data Services
GVA	Gross Value Added
GDHI	Gross Disposable Household Income

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Aim and scope

The present study is a sociolinguistic study examining accent variation and change in the county of Surrey, focusing on phonology. The aim of the thesis is threefold. As there exist few studies focusing on the Surrey accent, the first aim is to fill this empirical gap and provide some insight into the accent spoken in Surrey. The second aim is to see where the Surrey accent can be placed on the continuum between RP and Cockney. The third aim of the thesis is to see whether the changes in the Surrey accent correspond to the patterns of the ongoing process of dialect levelling in southeastern England.

There has to my knowledge not been conducted any empirical research focusing systematically on the Surrey accent during the last decades, though some researchers have included a few informants from Surrey in their studies (cf. Torgersen 1997, Przedlacka 2001). They did, however, not focus fully on the Surrey accent. Orton (1962) included Surrey in his *Survey of English Dialects*, henceforth SED. The SED was, however, written more than 50 years ago and as every accent and language changes through time, an updated study is long overdue. Additionally, the SED provides information only from a purely phonological point of view. My aim is therefore to provide a sociolinguistic study with a considerably higher number of informants from Surrey than found in previous studies. Furthermore, the project aims to fill the empirical gap by systematically taking a closer look at the accent spoken in Surrey.

Accents traditionally associated with Surrey are Near-RP and Estuary English (see further 1.2 for a description of Near-RP, and 2.6 for a discussion of Estuary English). Since the accent spoken in Surrey does not have a name, such as Cockney in London or Scouse in Liverpool, it will be referred to as *the Surrey accent* throughout the present thesis. Furthermore, as there do not really exist any studies that have examined the Surrey accent in detail the last fifty years, the present study aims to see whether the Surrey accent is more similar to Near-RP or Estuary English. The two accents mentioned above are both typically associated with the middle-class, and as Surrey has a reputation as a rather affluent and posh area, the study has aimed to include lower-middle class informants (see further 4.5).

The present study includes a comparison of two age groups to see if there are any systematic differences between younger and older speakers. If there are systematic differences in the use of the variants of the variables, they can be considered evidence of change. This is commonly referred to as *the apparent-time hypothesis* (see further 2.2.1). The study includes 16 informants, four younger females, four younger males, four older females, and four older males. The county of Surrey has 10 boroughs. The informants included in the study come from the two neighbouring boroughs Waverly and Guildford. All informants, except those who come from Guildford, belong to the same borough, i.e. the borough of Waverley. Guildford has status as a separate borough.

The study includes five phonological variables, which will be examined in relation to the extra-linguistic variables age and gender (see further 2.2.1, and 2.2.2). It would have been very interesting to compare classes in the present study. Unfortunately, there was not enough time or space to include such a comparison. I have, however, included a subsection dealing with class to illustrate how important and influential the extra-linguistic variable class may be.

The variables investigated are CURE-lowering, L-vocalisation, R-fronting, Yod-coalescence and upspeak. L-vocalisation, R-fronting and Yod-coalescence were chosen because they are commonly associated with Estuary English. CURE-lowering was chosen because I wanted to see if the diphthong /ʊə/ could still be found to a significant extent, or if the lowered variant [ɔː] had taken over. Since Surrey is a posh area, it is likely that the accent will be relatively conservative. [ʊə] is, today, considered a rather conservative variant, thus I was interested in finding out whether it would be the dominating variant of the CURE-vowel in the Surrey accent.

The phenomenon upspeak (see further 3.6) is a relatively known feature of Australian English and it has increased in General American and the United Kingdom, henceforth the UK. I was therefore curious to find out whether the feature had spread to Surrey as well. While the first four variables are found at a segmental level, the last variable, i.e. upspeak, is found at a supra-segmental level.

The study further aims to see if the changes in the Surrey accent are in line with the patterns found in the regional dialect levelling process in southeastern England (see further 2.5). Because Surrey has a reputation as a rather posh area, it is expected that the accent will be more conservative than in the rest of the southeast. However, Surrey is located in the middle of the area where the levelling process is happening. As a great amount of Surrey's inhabitants are commuting to London on a daily basis, it is highly unlikely that the Surrey accent will not be influenced in any way by the levelling process.

1.2 Accents associated with Surrey

As Surrey is considered a quite posh and wealthy area, it is likely that the accent is influenced by Received Pronunciation, henceforth RP. However, because Surrey is so close to London one might also expect the Surrey accent to be influenced by Cockney. Geographically speaking, Surrey is situated in the middle of the Estuary English area, which gives reason to assume some

influence of Estuary English as well.

The reference accent for the accent investigated in the present study is RP. RP is the most prestigious accent in England, and it is mainly spoken by the upper-class. People often refer to RP when they talk about a typical, non-localisable British accent. Wells (1982: 117) has also referred to RP as a 'Southern British Standard'.

During the last decades, a new accent has emerged. This new accent, which is based on Popular London English, is often referred to as Estuary English. Popular London English, sometimes referred to as London English, is an accent spoken by the majority of people in London. It is generally seen as somewhat closer to RP than the broadest Cockney (Wells 1982: 302). The new accent is increasingly taking over RP's traditional role as a neutral accent. However, since it does not have the same upper-class connotations, Estuary English is more attractive to a larger group of people.

Surrey is often referred to as one of the *Home Counties*, i.e. the counties adjacent to London (Wells 1982: 335). Due to Surrey's proximity to London, and London being a dominant centre, Surrey is an easy target for influences spreading from London. From a geographical point of view, it would be natural to assume that Cockney is the main influence on the Surrey accent. However, from a social point of view, Surrey is considered a quite posh area. This indicates that Near-RP is the most influential accent, which is why it is particularly interesting to examine the Surrey accent. Traditionally, the Surrey accent has been considered quite similar to Near-RP or Popular London English. Surrey's image as a high-class area makes it reasonable to assume that the inhabitants of Surrey have an accent similar to Near-RP. Wells (1982: 297) defines Near-RP as 'any accent which, while not falling within the definition RP, nevertheless includes very little in the way of regionalisms'. For speakers of RP, Near-RP may sound 'common'. However, it does not include enough regionalisms to be classified as any particular accent.

In 1984 David Rosewarne introduced the term Estuary English (see further 2.6). Rosewarne (1994: 3) claims that by imagining a continuum between RP and Cockney, Estuary English can be found in the middle. Estuary English is considered more posh than Cockney, yet it is not as posh as RP or Near-RP, though some speakers of Estuary English may have an accent that share more features with Near-RP than Cockney. For a more detailed discussion of accents in Surrey see section 2.6. The present study will use the terms RP, Near-RP, Estuary English, and Cockney throughout the thesis. In order to avoid confusion, terms such as Popular London English, London English, and Southern British Standard will be used only when the sources referred to require so.

1.3 Research questions and hypotheses

The research questions and hypotheses the current study aims to answer, have been established based on previous studies in southeastern England, and traditional sociolinguistic patterns regarding accent variation and change.

The research questions are as follows:

1. Is the Surrey accent changing, and if so, are the changes taking part in the process of regional dialect levelling in southeastern England?
2. Where does the Surrey accent belong on the continuum between RP and Cockney?
3. Do the extra-linguistic variables age and gender play a significant role in regards to the accent changes in Surrey?

The hypotheses are as follows:

1. My hypothesis is that the Surrey accent is changing and that the changes are led by younger females.
2. As Surrey is a rather posh area, but also very close to London, my hypothesis is that the Surrey accent can be placed around the Estuary English part of the continuum between RP and Cockney.
3. Given that the geographical placement of Surrey is an ideal source for potential levelling, it is likely that any changes in the Surrey-accent will be changing in correlation with the patterns of dialect levelling, thus becoming more similar to other accents in the southeast.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The present chapter has introduced the aim and scope of this study. Moreover, it has briefly mentioned why I chose to conduct my study in Surrey and provided an overview of the current language situation in Surrey. The chapter has also presented the research questions and hypotheses.

The second chapter presents the sociolinguistic background and theory needed in order to appreciate the present thesis. Furthermore, chapter two provides information about the geographical placement and demographics of Surrey. The chapter also contains a presentation of previous studies, which serve as the context for the current study. Furthermore, chapter two provides an introduction to the concept of dialect levelling, and a discussion of Estuary English.

The next chapter contains detailed descriptions of the variables examined in the present study. The descriptions contain background information about each variable, and state which variants are relevant for the current investigation.

Chapter four deals with the methodological framework the present study has worked within. It explains the term sampling on a general basis and in relation to my study, i.e. the process of finding and classifying informants. This is followed by an explanation of quantitative sociolinguistics and the linguistic variable. Moreover, the chapter deals with the general idea of data collection and the methods used to collect data and elicit relevant speech in this study. A short

section has been added to justify the classification of the informants as lower-middle class. The last part of the chapter aims at providing a description of how the auditory analysis was carried out and how the tokens were classified.

The results of the analyses are provided in chapter five. Each variable is given a section where the results are presented by tables and figures, followed by a discussion of the findings. In addition, the chapter discusses the results in relation to dialect levelling. Lastly, a section is dedicated to other observations made during the process of interviewing informants and analysing the recordings.

Chapter six sums up the results in relation to the research questions, the hypotheses and topics discussed in previous chapters. The chapter also aims at providing a conclusion to the thesis. Furthermore, the chapter contains a section that suggests topics for further research. The chapter also contains a section that deals with the shortcomings and limitations of the thesis. Lastly, the chapter includes a section dedicated to the contributions made by the present thesis.

Chapter 2

Theory

2.1 Introduction

In the present chapter, I will present the theoretical background needed to appreciate this thesis. The first part will focus on sociolinguistic theory and background. The second part of this chapter will focus on Surrey and previous studies of south eastern English. Thirdly, the chapter contains a discussion of dialect levelling and Estuary English.

2.2 Sociolinguistic background and theory

Hudson (1996: 1) defines sociolinguistics as '*the study of language in relation to society*' (emphasis in original). The study of language and society is not new. Prior to sociolinguistics, both dialectology and semantics in relation to social conventions had been studied for a long period of time as subdisciplines of linguistics. From the 1960s, the interest in studies of this kind spread and became more common. Reasons for the increasing interest in sociolinguistics are the discoveries researchers have made on the basis of empirical studies such as Labov's study on the social stratification of (r) in New York. As the field of sociolinguistics expands, we learn that there are great surprises and much wisdom to achieve by conducting sociolinguistic studies both for linguists and laypeople (Hudson 1996: 2). The ways in which society and language interact and influence each other are more complex and systematic than one might think.

The aim of sociolinguistics is to ascertain how and why languages are changing. The focus of sociolinguistics is on how the language is influenced by external factors, and in what way these factors might be significant in the process of language variation and change. Hence, the sociolinguist is interested in finding out how social variables such as age, gender, class, network, ethnicity and social conventions can have an impact on the speakers' conscious and subconscious linguistic choices. These variables are often referred to as extra-linguistic variables and seen as plausible reasons and influential factors regarding language change. The relevant extra-linguistic variables for this thesis are age and gender. As I am not comparing classes, class is not directly relevant for the present thesis. However, as class is very important in the UK, I have included a

section dealing with class.

2.2.1 Age

Conducting a study on language variation and change has its difficulties when it comes to the extra-linguistic variable *age*. In order to see how a language or an accent changes, we need data from different age groups. Ideally, the linguist should have the opportunity to elicit speech from informants from the stage of infancy until retirement, this would be an extreme form of a *real-time study*. The idea of a real-time study is that the linguist elicits the information he or she needs through sociolinguistic interviews (see further 4.4.1) at one point in time and returns to the same community at a later point, e.g. 40 years later to conduct new interviews. The speech is then compared in order to see whether there have been any changes, and if so, what the changes are. Trudgill's study of the Norwich accent is often referred to as an example of a real-time study (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 37). Trudgill performed a study in Norwich and returned 15 years later to replicate his study. By doing so, he could compare how his informants spoke 15 years ago with how they spoke at the time he returned (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 37). As real-time studies are extremely time-consuming, linguists often find that the alternative, *apparent-time studies*, are easier to conduct.

The most common way of studying language change and, more specifically accent change, is to follow the principles of the apparent time hypothesis. Instead of following speakers of one accent throughout their whole life, different generations are compared, any changes observed are interpreted as evidence of language change or accent change. The principle of the apparent-time hypothesis is that people of different ages can be used as representative of different times. After the end of the critical period and the adolescent years, an individual's linguistic system remains relatively stable throughout life. The apparent-time hypothesis is therefore considered adequate for a sociolinguistic study. By comparing a speaker that is 80 years old with a speaker that is 20 years old, one can draw some assumptions about the changes that seem to have taken place. The speakers compared should be of the same class, same sex (unless one specifically wants to research gender differences), and have the same ethnic origin. In order to get a good overview and compare different generations, it is common to include at least two age groups, though some linguists choose to include several age groups. During his examination of intonation in New Zealand English, Britain compared speakers aged 20-29, 40-49, and 70-79. The high rising terminal he was examining, also known as upspeak, was found in a significant amount of the utterances in the group with the youngest speakers (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 35). According to Eckert (1997: 152), we need both real-time studies and apparent-time studies. In order to get the most reliable and truly representative results a combination is needed.

Age is a relatively easy variable to define compared to other variables. Eckert (1997: 151) defines age as 'if *aging* is a movement through time, *age* is a person's place at a given time in relation to the social order: a stage, a condition, a place in history' (emphasis in original). As opposed to the other extra-linguistic variables, age is not affected by economy, social status, etc.

Age is an important variable, as there are general life stages all speakers will have to go through. These stages may affect the way people speak. Differences between generations are, however, not always the result of a change, in some cases the differences might be a result of *age-grading*, i.e. the temporary use of a variant at a particular stage in life (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 36). Adolescents will often lead the changes. They might for example wish to distinguish themselves explicitly from adults by the use of non-standard features or by using supra-local features to distance themselves from the older speakers who retain the local features. During adulthood speakers typically become more conservative (Eckert 1997: 164). One reason is pressure from the workplace. In order to be treated as a serious co-worker or representative of the workplace one might have to use a more conservative or standardised language. In later years, there have been some studies where the results indicate that people use less standard language after retirement (Eckert 1997: 165). A study in Finland indicated that from childhood to adulthood, female speech became more normative. However, as they progressed from middle age to old age their speech became less normative (Eckert 1997: 164).

Watt's study of the Geordie accent (2002), examined the change in the FACE and GOAT vowels. The vowels are shifting from the typical local variants [ɪə] and [ʊə] to the supra-local monophthongs [eː] and [oː]. The results clearly show that younger speakers use the incoming, supra-local variants while older speakers use the local variants.

2.2.2 Gender

The term *gender* is used when referring to differences between the sexes that can be related to social conventions. The term *sex* refers to the biological differences between males and females. As numerous previous studies show, the results often show differences in female and male speech patterns. The general tendency when it comes to gender and language is that women lead most changes and use more of the standard forms, while men use more non-standard forms. Previously, women did not work outside the home, thus speaking with a standard accent was the women's way of enhancing their status. Labov suggests that another plausible explanation as to why females use standard language more than males is child-rearing where, traditionally, women had the leading role (Gordon 2013: 153). Labov further claims that women feel responsible for the 'upward mobility of their children' (Gordon 2013: 153 with reference to Labov 2001b: 278).

Standard forms are often prestigious and supra-local while non-standard forms are less prestigious and local, although in some cases the local accent is seen as more prestigious. There is typically a correlation between class and the prestige of linguistic features. A feature used by the upper-class and middle-class is typically recognised as a prestigious feature while a feature used by the working-class is typically considered a non-standard feature. Females tend to be somewhat more concerned with status and class, and one way of expressing loyalty to a group is by using the same linguistic features.

The view that females use more standard and supra-local features is supported by the findings of Milroy et al in their study of Tyneside English (1994) and Watt's study of the Geordie accent

(2002). Milroy et al studied the use of glottalised variants. Their overall results showed that male speakers used more of the glottal reinforcement, which is the local feature. Females used more of the glottal replacement, which is a supra-local feature. They also found that the females were leading the change. As the glottal replacement has spread throughout all of England, it is now considered a national, supra-local feature whereas the glottal reinforcement still is a local feature.

Watt (2002) found the same pattern in his study of the FACE and GOAT vowels in Newcastle. The mainstream, supra-local northern English variants [eː] and [oː] occurred with a higher frequency in female speech than in male speech. Males used more of the local variants.

In her study of the high rising terminal in statements, otherwise known as upspeak and uptalk, Bradford (1997) found that the occurrences of upspeak were more frequent among girls than boys. She also found that girls were first to use the high rising terminal in statements.

2.2.3 Class

While acknowledging the vagueness of the term *class*, Milroy & Gordon (2003: 95) define class as follows: 'a class ... consist[s] of a group of people sharing similar occupations and incomes, life-styles and beliefs'. Class is an important factor in sociolinguistic studies carried out in the UK. Traditionally, there has been a very sharp social stratification in the UK, and class is considered a more influential factor in the UK than in many other countries.

During the last fifty years, there has been a rapid increase in people's mobility. People move around and travel more than they used to. Although there has been an enormous expansion in geographical mobility, social mobility has increased even more. When we classify people into different categories, we must remember that we are dealing with stereotypical categories and exceptions will occur. Even so, there are definitions of social classes that will suffice for the purpose of sociolinguistic studies. The three main classes are working-class, middle-class and upper-class. However, as class can be quite a problematic concept we need to delineate clear boundaries. Thus, we can divide the three main classes further into subgroups. The middle-class is often divided into the subgroups upper-middle class, UMC, middle-middle class, MMC, and lower-middle class, LMC. We find the same divisions in the working-class with upper-working class, UWC, middle-working class, MWC and lower-working class, LWC.

Traditionally, the upper-class and middle-class speakers use more standard features while non-standard features can be found with working-class speakers. Chambers (2003: 42) defines the working-class as manual workers, the middle-class as non-manual workers, and the upper-class as people who have inherited wealth. The classes are sometimes referred to by the traditional colour of the work attire. The working-class is categorised as blue collar workers. The middle-class is categorised as white collar workers. The main factors we must consider when deciding if a person should be classified as working-class or middle-class are education, occupation, income, and housing. A middle-class speaker typically has a university education. Typically, working-class occupations are laborers, seasonal workers, clerks, and manual workers (Chambers 2003: 43). Professions such as owners, directors, and managers are typically middle-class

occupations.

Traditionally, the middle-class members have a higher income than working-class members, though it is not always so. Today, an electrician without a university degree may make more money than a person with a university degree. Income correlates with housing, as the size and standard of a house increase with the income. A working-class person will most likely have a smaller house or a flat as opposed to a middle-class speaker who may be able to afford a big house.

The upper-class differs from the other classes. The members consist primarily of people who have inherited their wealth and privileges (Chambers 2003: 42). However, not all members of the upper-class are actually rich or have a university education. A lord can claim to be upper-class despite having no education or money. In such cases, social status becomes the most important and influential factor.

In Labov's study (2006) of the social stratification of (r) in New York City, he investigated the pronunciation of the variable (r) in relation to social classes. Although it could be said that the employees in the shops he investigated belonged to the same class, the shops they worked in were very different in terms of prestige. Saks was a high prestige shop while S.Klein had the lowest prestige, Macy's was placed in the middle. The employees in these shops modified their speech towards their expected customers. Hence, a shop assistant at Saks used more prestigious features than a shop assistant at S.Klein. Labov (2006) found that there was a clear stratification of (r) in the three stores, and class did in fact influence the use of (r). Rhoticity is seen as a prestigious feature in the US. Consequently, the employees in the prestigious shop, Saks, showed higher occurrences of (r) than the employees at Macy's and S.Klein (ibid.). In their study of the Glaswegian accent, Stuart-Smith et al (2007) found that class was the strongest marker of the extra-linguistic variables included. There was a great polarisation between working-class speakers and middle-class speakers. The working-class speakers deliberately chose incoming features from England as way of distancing themselves from the middle-class.

2.3 Surrey

Surrey is a county in southeastern England and considered one of the Home Counties. It is located outside London and connected to the River Thames. Surrey borders to Greater London, Kent, Berkshire, Hampshire, East Sussex, and West Sussex. According to the 2011: Accessed 2014-04-26 Census, the resident population was 1,132,400 in 2011. The administrative headquarters, Surrey County Council is situated at Kingston upon Thames. Kingston upon Thames is, however, no longer a part of Surrey, and Woking was at one point considered a natural place to move the county council (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2013: Accessed 2014-01-11).

The boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Lambeth, Southwark, Sutton, and Wandsworth were all parts of north eastern Surrey until they became parts of Greater London. Since Surrey is so close to London, most towns and villages are

now commuter towns. The area is highly attractive because of its proximity to London and its countryside atmosphere. One may live in what is the stereotypical English village and still be within a 50 minute journey from London. This is especially attractive to international business people and major companies such as Nikon, Whirlpool, etc., who moved their headquarters into Surrey. Surrey is one of the most affluent counties in England and home to celebrities like Elton John, Judi Dench, and Prince Edward to name a few. Surrey has a greater GVA, Gross Value Added, per person than the rest of England, except for London, and it is the most expensive county to live in except for London (The Office of National Statistics 2011: Accessed 2014-01-23). The GDHI, Gross Disposable Household Income, in Surrey is 36% greater than the rest of England, only beaten by London (The Office of National Statistics 2011: Accessed 2014-01-23). Consequently, it is not surprising that Surrey is one of the counties with the highest number of millionaires in England. One of my informants complained about 'all these bankers' who lived in Surrey and were 'multi, multi millionaires'. This was confirmed by other informants as well. The topic of Surrey and its status as a posh area came up during most of the interviews that were conducted for the present study. There was a strong consensus that Surrey is a very posh and wealthy area. On the one hand, some of my informants implied that it was almost embarrassing to talk to people outside Surrey because they were seen as posh. On the other hand, two of my informants made it very clear that 'we *don't* go to Birmingham or Leeds or anything like *that!*', which indicates that they identified themselves as too posh to visit these areas.

Prior to the second world war, there were many large estates in Surrey. After the war new houses were built, these were generally much smaller in order to house more people. Today, the main focus of construction lies on building flats and multi-storey houses (Surrey Houses 2014: Accessed 2014-04-28). Despite the small houses and flats, prices in Surrey are going up. Generally, housing in the cities is expensive, but the further you move towards the countryside the cheaper housing will be. Traditionally, this has also been the case in Surrey. However, this is now changing, and a flat on the border of Hampshire is not necessarily significantly cheaper than a flat on the border of London or in the middle of Surrey. One of my informants told me that she and her partner had just bought a two bedroom house in West Sussex. If they were to buy in Surrey, they would only get a small flat.

2.4 Previous studies

There are, to my knowledge, few previous studies focusing on the Surrey accent. Some might argue that the Surrey accent can be defined as Estuary English (see further 2.6), as Surrey is considered one of the Home Counties where Estuary English is supposedly spoken. However, since the term Estuary English is highly debatable, and linguists seem unable to agree on the existence of Estuary English, I have chosen to work with the term the Surrey accent. None of the informants included in the present study were able to assign a name to their accent. When asked what accent they had the answers were usually 'normal English' or 'a posh accent'. Because

Surrey is so close to London, the Surrey accent is bound to be influenced by Cockney. However, as Surrey is a quite posh area and home to a great amount of upper-middle class and upper-class members, it is likely that the Surrey accent is influenced by RP as well. Based on this one may assume that the Surrey accent can be found around the Estuary English part of the continuum, or in the middle between Estuary English and RP.

In his study of southeastern British English, Torgersen (1997) raises the question of whether Estuary English (see further 2.6) can be defined as a separate accent. In his discussion of Estuary English, he argues that 'since all the speakers of it still retain some regional features, it is not focused' (Torgersen 1997: 6). Consequently, Estuary English cannot be pinpointed as a separate accent. The variables investigated in Torgersen's study were: L-vocalisation, R-fronting, FOOT-fronting, GOOSE-fronting, and GOOSE diphthonging. He compared young boys and girls aged 19-27, and older men and women aged 40-60. All his informants were middle-class (Torgersen 1997: 13). Torgersen (ibid: 75) found that L-vocalisation had spread to 'large areas outside its traditional dialect area'. R-fronting, FOOT-fronting, GOOSE-fronting, and GOOSE diphthonging were all used primarily by young girls. His study was also an important contribution to the dialect levelling project in southeastern English.

In her study of RP in broadcast speech, Hannisdal (2006: 20) draws awareness to the fact that there does not actually exist a universal definition of RP. Generally speaking, one may put it as simply as saying that RP is a non-regional, non-localisable spoken standard-English accent. Although RP is non-localisable, it has its origins in the southeast of England (Hannisdal 2006: 29). Previously, RP was spoken by the upper-class and educated speakers in London and the surrounding affluent areas, such as Surrey. As accents continue to change, several varieties of RP have arisen. Wells (1982: 279) proposes terms such as Upper-crust RP, which is the accent associated with the upper-class, and Mainstream-RP, which is less conservative than Upper-crust RP. Wells also mentions something he calls Near-RP, which is perhaps the most relevant variety of RP in the present study. It is defined as 'any accent which is essentially RP, but which consistently or variably contains regional features that enable a phonetician to locate the speaker geographically' (Hannisdal 2006: 17). Hannisdal (2006: 94) found that a great number of the changes in RP are influences from the London accent, also known as Estuary English. Hannisdal studied the variables CURE-lowering, GOAT-allophony, R-sandhi, T-voicing, Smoothing, and Yod-coalescence. Her analysis of the CURE variable shows that lowering of [ʊə] to [ɔː] is hardly a completed change (Hannisdal 2006: 153). The results for Yod-coalescence confirmed that /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are establishing in RP. In general, Hannisdal's results show that there are ongoing changes in RP. While RP is accommodating towards Estuary English, RP can still be considered a separate variety.

Foulkes & Docherty (2000) studied the realisation of /r/ as a labiodental approximant [ʋ] in Derby and Newcastle upon Tyne. Originally, [ʋ] was found in southeastern England. However, research shows that it is spreading to the north. Foulkes & Docherty recorded males and females who were divided into two age groups. Their informants were both middle-class and working-class. Their findings show that [ʋ] was not found among the older speakers, and there were no

clear gender differences (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 42). Furthermore, their findings show that the younger speakers used the two variants inconsistently. The labiodental [ʋ] occurred with a higher frequency in Derby than Newcastle with working-class speakers leading the change.

Torgersen & Kerswill (2004) examined the accents in Ashford and Reading to see to what extent the accents were taking part in the process of dialect levelling. Although Ashford is located in Kent and Reading in Berkshire, the accents are converging and becoming more similar. Thus, we can claim evidence of both cities taking part in the ongoing process of dialect levelling. The changes in Ashford were primarily linked to speech accommodation through dialect contact. In Reading, however, geographical diffusion seemed to be the cause of the changes. The results showed that there was a systematic vowel shift in Ashford. Whereas in Reading, there was also evidence of a vowel shift, though it could not be considered systematic. The changes were primarily led by young, female speakers.

Tollfree (1999) investigated the London accent. She compared two groups classified as SELE (South-East London English) and SELRS (South-East London Regional Standard). The first group refers to working-class speakers and the latter to middle-class speakers. In CURE-words, Tollfree (1999: 169) found that environments with a preceding /j/ are typically pronounced with [ʊ̟ə] or [ʉ̟ə]. All other environments had an [ɔ] or [ɔː] quality. She does not provide any clear information for R-fronting except a comment which states that 'some individuals demonstrate variable use of a labiodental approximant [ʋ] for R' (Tollfree 1999: 174). Four of her 90 informants had a consistent use of R-fronting (ibid.). L-vocalisation was found with all Tollfree's informants, though there was a higher frequency of L-vocalisation with the younger speakers.

In their study of dialect levelling in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull, Williams & Kerswill (1999) focused mainly on one age group, namely, 14-15 year old adolescents. The other extralinguistic variables taken into consideration were sex and class (working-class and middle-class). In addition to the 96 adolescents, they included four working-class speakers over the age of 70 in each town. Williams & Kerswill studied both phonological inventory and phonetic realisations. Their results indicate that the accents of the three towns are converging, i.e. taking part in the levelling process. Nevertheless, there are still some salient differences between the accents. What seems to be the most important distinction here is how the changes are spreading. As Milton Keynes is a relatively new town with a loose-knit community, changes are spreading quite rapidly. Whereas in Hull and Reading, there are more close-knit communities. Close-knit communities are more resistant to language change. Reading is, however, also a commuter town, which means that there is a great deal of dialect contact with speakers from other cities. Thus, it is natural to find that the Reading accent is changing. Williams & Kerswill found that the opportunities of geographical and social mobility were present in both Milton Keynes and Reading. In Hull, however, both geographical mobility and social mobility were less likely explanatory factors in relation to the accent changes. They also found attitude to be an important factor in Hull. Although Hull was more linguistically conservative, the adolescents were open to linguistic innovations coming from outside (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 162).

As a part of her study of Estuary English, Altendorf (2003) conducted a study on southeastern English focusing on London, Colchester, and Canterbury. She chose Colchester and Canterbury as they are undergoing the same linguistic influence, they are at a similar distance from London, and do not define themselves at London 'satellites' (Altendorf 2003: 43). In Colchester and Canterbury, she studied only middle-class girls. Her study focused on the regional, social, and stylistic distribution of the linguistic variants. Altendorf considered a wide range of linguistic variables. The variables relevant for the present study are L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence. Her results show that vocalisation of non-prevocalic /l/ is near-categorical with the middle-class speakers (Altendorf 2003: 95). As L-vocalisation is most advanced in London, Altendorf concludes that the feature has spread from London to Colchester and Canterbury. Among her upper-middle class and middle-class informants in London, Altendorf (2003: 99) found that Yod-coalescence 'occurs with equal frequency' among the upper-middle class and middle-classes. Yod-coalescence was also found among the Canterbury informants. However, Yod-coalescence was not found in working-class speech or among her Colchester informants. Based on the results, her conclusion is that Yod-coalescence has been subject to change and socially gained acceptance among the upper-middle class (Altendorf 2003: 99).

2.5 Dialect levelling

Dialect changes are primarily linked to external motivations. In order to understand why language change happens, we have to examine the external reasons for dialect and accent change. Accent changes were previously thought of as being modelled on the standard accent RP (Foulkes & Docherty 1999: 10). In recent years, studies have contradicted this belief by providing evidence of the influence of non-standard accents. The most influential non-standard accents in the UK today are the southeastern non-standard accents, with Popular London English being the most influential of all. Wells noted this in his *Accents of English* (1982) where he discussed the linguistic influence London has had in England. He briefly comments that the upper-class speech of London English has been the basis for RP and Standard English (Wells 1982: 301). However, the most influential accent is probably Cockney, the working-class accent in London: 'its working-class accent is today the most influential source of phonological innovation in England and perhaps in the whole English-speaking world' (ibid.).

Research shows that accents and dialects in England are levelling. The term *dialect levelling* refers to the 'process whereby differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area' (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 149). In his discussion of the Høyanger accent, Trudgill (1986: 98) defines levelling as 'the reduction or attrition of marked variants'. One accent that may be seen as a result of levelling is Estuary English.

Kerswill (2003) proposes two possible mechanisms that might help explain the process of the ongoing changes in British English. The first mechanism suggested is *geographical diffusion*.

The term geographical diffusion is defined as the process 'by which features spread out from a populous and economically and culturally dominant centre' (Kerswill 2003: 223). The changes are spreading in a wave-like manner, and most likely, the changes will affect the nearby cities before the rural parts (ibid.). The starting point of the spread is often economically and culturally dominant centres such as London, and the variants in question affect the surrounding smaller cities first and the rural areas last. For this to happen some sort of contact between the accents is required. Thus, it is typically the highly mobile speakers that are the first ones to be influenced. As people travel and move around, they experience more face-to-face contact with people from other regions (Trudgill 1986: 42). Among the features used to illustrate geographical diffusion, Kerswill mentions TH-fronting, i.e. the realisation of /θ/ as /f/, and /ð/ as /v/. His discussion is based on data from Reading, Milton Keynes and Hull (Kerswill 2003: 230). TH-fronting originated in the Bristol and London areas and spread out. Trudgill (1986: 42) refers to his study of Norwich English where there traditionally has been an /ɑ/ in LOT-words which is now being replaced by /ɒ/. According to Trudgill, there are two reasons as to why the rounded vowel is entering the Norwich accent. The first reason is as a result of middle-class speakers coming into contact with speakers of RP. The second reason is as a result of working-class speakers who have contact with working-class speakers in surrounding towns on a regular basis (ibid.).

The second mechanism Kerswill suggests is *speech accommodation*. Whenever speakers of different, yet mutually intelligible varieties of a language meet, speech accommodation is bound to happen at some level (Trudgill 1986: 1). According to Giles (Trudgill 1986: 2 with reference to Giles 1973), speakers may sometimes wish to reduce the pronunciation differences between the accents to gain approval. The sender may want to reduce the differences by modifying a feature or completely abandon it to get the recipient's approval or respect.

Trudgill (1986: 3) draws attention to the two different ways accommodation may occur, namely, short-term accommodation and long-term accommodation. In the context of dialect change and dialect levelling, long-term accommodation is of most interest. Frequent short-term contact over time may lead to long-term accommodation. According to Trudgill (1986: 12), accommodation that occurs within a speech community often involves features the speakers can control, and the speakers know which features to use and which to reduce. Accommodation that occurs regionally, however, is more likely to 'involve the adoption of totally new features of pronunciation' (Trudgill 1986: 12). Speech accommodation occurs both at a regional and a national level. Vowels tend to spread regionally, such as the FACE and GOAT vowels in Northern England where /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ are realised as [eː] and [oː], and GOOSE-fronting in southern England where /uː/ is realised as [ʉː]. Consonants are widespread and tend to spread nationally. Examples of this are T-glottaling, the realisation of /t/ as [ʔ], L-vocalisation, the realisation of /l/ as [ʊ], and TH-fronting where /θ/ and /ð/ are realised as [f] and [v]. Today, these are all as considered national features in England.

For speech accommodation to happen, there must either be a case of mutual agreement or convergence amongst socially and geographically mobile people. In some cases, speech accom-

modation happens when a speaker moves into a new community and wants to blend in. People must be willing to adapt to the other members of the community. In Watt's study of Tyneside English (2002), he found that the younger speakers prefer the regional monophthongs [eː] and [oː] instead of the traditional diphthongs [ɪə] and [ʊə]. According to the speakers, they accommodate their accent towards the regional northern accent. They want to abandon the most stigmatising and old fashioned features. Their goal is to sound modern, but still northern.

Due to Surrey being so close to London and the extensive number of commuters constantly increasing, it is only natural to assume that the Surrey accent is partaking in the dialect levelling process. The commuters are coming into contact with Londoners, and all the other accents one may meet in such a large city, on an every day basis. After a while, it is likely that they will bring the features they are exposed to back into their own community.

2.6 Estuary English

The term Estuary English was coined by Rosewarne in 1984. Rosewarne (1994: 3) describes Estuary English as a 'variety of modified regional speech'. He further claims that Estuary English is 'a mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation' (ibid.).

The term Estuary English is derived from the Thames Estuary. Most people know that the river flows through London. However, the Thames also flows through all of Southern England, from Gloucestershire and into the North Sea. The Thames Estuary is where the Thames meets the North Sea and it can be found in North Kent and South Essex. By using the term Estuary English, one can include speakers throughout London, Greater London, and the Home Counties such as Kent, Surrey, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Berkshire. According to Wells (1994: 1), Estuary English is based on the popular speech of the southeast of England, primarily London English, and centred on the Thames Estuary. Furthermore, he claims that Estuary English is really just London English (ibid.).

Estuary English is often said to be found in the middle on an imagined continuum between RP and Cockney. Traditionally, RP has been associated with the upper-class and RP speakers were usually rich and rather posh. Cockney, however, is associated with the working-class speakers in Eastern London, the so called Eastenders. Coggle (1993: 24) speculates that Estuary English has developed out of a combination of geographic and social factors. One of the most obvious reasons is the influence of London throughout the rest of England. Coggle claims that the phenomenon, Estuary English, originated after the second World War. However, according to Wells (1997: 3), Estuary English, though it is a new name, is not a new phenomenon. Wells (ibid.) argues that popular and influential features of the capital have been spreading both geographically and socially for 500 or more years. Coggle further mentions movements of population as a geographical cause for the development of Estuary English. Londoners have for various reasons chosen to move out of London and settle in the Home Counties. The Londoners kept their accent, and due to the great number of Londoners emigrating, the accent influenced the accents in the

areas where the Londoners settled.

An important factor regarding the development of Estuary English at the social level is the fact that it may be used by speakers to accommodate to others. In some cases, speakers of RP and Cockney will feel the need to modify their speech. The RP speaker may feel that talking too posh excludes him or her from a group. The Cockney speakers may feel that their accent is too closely linked to London and working-class speech. They may also feel that to be a part of the community, they have to modify their speech towards the others. Estuary English, thus, becomes the middle ground where speakers of both ends of the spectrum meet and avoid stigmatisation (Coggle 1993: 26). As Levey & Harris (2002: 2) point out 'Estuary English offers some type of refuge. RP, to many, sounds *posh* or *superior*, while a Cockney accent may have *hard, dishonest, uneducated* or *comic* connotations' (emphasis in original).

Rosewarne (1994: 7) proposes that Estuary English is the outcome of a process of accommodation. He promotes the extremely powerful force of peer group pressure as evidence for accommodation where RP speakers accommodate 'downwards' and local accent speakers accommodate 'upwards'. This view is supported by Kerswill. Kerswill (2001: 10) states that he does agree with what is said about Estuary English except for Estuary English being a new phenomenon, as "'intermediate" varieties have existed for a long time'. Rather, he sees it as a result of accommodation and dialect levelling.

2.6.1 Linguistic features of Estuary English

The phonological features typically used to define Estuary English are:

- L-vocalisation: the realisation of non-prevocalic /l/ as [ʊ] (Wells 1997: 2).

- GOAT-allophony: the realisation of the GOAT-vowel as [oʊ] before dark l, which may lead to a phonemic split (Wells 1994b: 1).

- T-glottaling: the replacement of /t/ by a glottal stop [ʔ] (Wells 1997: 2).

- Yod-Coalescence in stressed environments: the alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ + the palatal approximant /j/ are coalesced and pronounced as the palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ (Wells 1997: 2).

- Diphthong shift in FACE, PRICE, and GOAT-vowels. /eɪ, aɪ, əʊ/ are realised as [æɪ, ɑɪ, ʌʊ] (Wells 1994b: 1).

-R-fronting: the substitution of the post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] with a labiodental approximant [ʋ] (Coggle 1993: 48).

With respect to the features presented here, Estuary English is quite similar to Cockney. However, Estuary English also differs from Cockney, and is similar to RP in that it confines to standard grammar and usage. Well known Cockney features such as H-dropping, MOUTH-monophthongisation, and to a certain extent TH-fronting, do not occur in Estuary English. While Wells (1994; 1997) does not mention R-fronting as a feature of Estuary English, Coggle (1993: 48) claims that R-fronting is a feature of Estuary English.

In his very brief discussion of Estuary English, or London Regional RP as Cruttenden prefers to call it (2008: 87), Cruttenden touches upon a supra-segmental characteristic of Cockney that has spread into Estuary English. The supra-segmental characteristic he refers to is the '"unknown" tag interrogative'. In the unknown interrogative tag, Estuary English speakers use a falling tone. The unknown interrogative tag presumes that the listener has some knowledge about the topic of discussion in cases where the listener usually will have no previous knowledge, e.g. 'I was woken up at 6.30 this morning; the postman came knocking on the door, didn't he?' (Cruttenden 2008: 87).

As previously mentioned, the question of whether Estuary English actually is an accent is still up for discussion among linguists, media and laypeople. There is also an ongoing disagreement regarding whether Estuary English is just an accent, if it is a dialect, or if it is in fact, anything at all. The linguistic variables, though there are several variables that are repeatedly used in descriptions of Estuary English, are not conclusive. Coggle and Rosewarne seem to agree on the existence of Estuary English as an accent (Coggle's book is primarily based on Rosewarne's work). They provide evidence of phonological features, supra-segmental features, and vocabulary features. By including vocabulary features we may per definition classify Estuary English as a dialect.

In addition to disputing the chaotic definitions, Maidment (1994: 6) is concerned with the impression Coggle and Rosewarne give when claiming that there is a linguistic continuum with RP at the one end, Estuary English in the middle and Cockney at the other end. Maidment discards this by saying that the boundaries are too rigid. Furthermore, Maidment criticises Coggle for assigning the use of the labiodental approximant [ʋ], also known as R-fronting, to Estuary English as he claims the majority do not have it. According to Maidment (1994: 4), the use of a labiodental approximant is a speech defect only. Other studies, such as Marsden (2006) and Foulkes & Docherty (2000) have provided evidence of this so called speech defect as an incoming feature in some accents. Levey & Harris (2002: 2) also express some scepticism towards Estuary English, stating that 'if truth be told, the status of EE is questionable'. They point out that there is nothing new and its features can be found in both Cockney and RP (Levey & Harris 2002: 2). Przedlacka (2001) conducted a study on Estuary English in the counties Kent, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, and Essex. Based on her findings, she concludes that Estuary English is not one uniform accent that can be found throughout Home Counties, as the Home Counties seem to display differences in the use of the variables she investigated.

Chapter 3

The variables

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a presentation of the phonological variables that have been focused on and analysed in the present study. Since the Surrey accent can be linked to Estuary English, it seemed natural to investigate some features of Estuary English, thus, the features L-vocalisation, Yod-coalescence, and R-fronting were chosen. By focusing on these features the present thesis will provide a better picture of whether the Surrey accent can be classified as Estuary English, Near-RP, or if it is becoming more similar to Cockney. The reason for choosing to examine the CURE-vowel and upspeak was based on personal observations during previous visits to Surrey.

3.2 CURE-lowering

Words belonging to the lexical set CURE [1] are those where the diphthong /ʊə/ is traditionally found in RP. According to Wells (1982: 163-164), the CURE-vowel occurs in three environments: in free positions such as *tour, poor, insure, etc*. In prevocalic environments such as *tourist, Ural, purity, etc*. And in pre-consonantal environments such as *Bourbon, gourd etc*.

The CURE-vowel is phonetically described as a centring diphthong where the tongue glides from the rounded close-mid, back vowel [ʊ], ending in the central vowel quality [ə]. However, the use of [ʊə] is decreasing and the use of the back, open-mid monophthong [ɔː] is increasing, taking over the place of [ʊə] in a great number of words. This phenomenon, where [ʊə] is lowered to [ɔː], is referred to as CURE-lowering by phoneticians such as Wells (1982: 237). In words with the environment consonant + /j/ such as *cure, secure, bureau, puerile, etc.*, there has been less change from [ʊə] to [ɔː], though the words *cure* and *secure* are sometimes heard with the monophthong [ʌ] instead of a diphthong in Refined RP (Cruttenden 2008: 153). The use of [ɔː] instead of [ʊə] can be seen as a merger of the two phonemes /ʊ/ and /ɔː/ where /ʊə/ is lowered and replaced by [ɔː], this merger is known as the CURE-FORCE Merger (Wells 1982: 162). However, the fact

1. See Wells (1982) for a definition of lexical sets.

that [ʊə] tends to be preserved in environments with a consonant + /j/ and in certain words, at least in RP, indicates that lexical distribution is a factor that should be included in an investigation of the phoneme /ʊə/ (Wells 1982: 287-288).

It is often believed that [ɔː] is now the preferred vowel in most frequent CURE-words and monosyllabic CURE-words, while [ʊə] seems to be retained in certain words that are rarely used. According to Cruttenden (2008: 152), monophthongisation of [ʊə] into [ʊː] is an alternative development of [ʊə]. The distribution of the monophthongal variant [ʊː] is increasing and becoming more common (ibid: 153). Initially, I only intended to operate with binary categories for CURE-lowering, i.e. [ʊə] and [ɔː]. However, as I observed all three realisations, I have chosen to operate with three variants. The three variants of the CURE-vowel that will be investigated in the present study are [ʊə], [ʊː] and [ɔː]. Cruttenden uses the symbol [ʊː] for CURE-monophthongisation. I have chosen to use the same symbol, as the exact vowel quality is unknown.

Linguists claim that [ʊə] eventually will be completely lost in the future, and CURE-lowering is often referred to as a well-established change. So far, the result of CURE-lowering leaves us with what used to be minimal pairs, ending up as homophonous pairs such as *sure-shore, poor-paw*. Eventually, the result will be an increase in homophonous pairs, as well as a phoneme shift in the remaining CURE-words, which will strengthen the set of FORCE-words (Hannisdal 2006: 99).

3.3 L-vocalisation

Vocalisation of /l/, also known as L-vocalisation, refers to the realisation of /l/ as a dark [ɫ] with a vowel quality close to the back, close vowels [ʊ, o] meaning that words such as *milk* and *little* are pronounced [mɪʊk] and [ˈlɪtʊ]. L-vocalisation occurs in non-prevocalic position. The phonetic symbols used to describe L-vocalisation range from [ʊ, o] to the semivowel [w]. In this thesis [ʊ] will be used as the phonetic symbol for L-vocalisation. In the analysis of L-vocalisation, I have used binary categories, i.e. either it is realised as a dark [ɫ] or a vocalised [ʊ].

The alveolar lateral /l/ is pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge and a continuous stream of air escaping through one or both sides of the mouth. In RP, the clear [l] and dark [ɫ] are in complementary distribution. The allophonic rule is that clear [l] occurs in the environment of a following vowel, i.e. in a prevocalic position. The dark [ɫ] occurs in all other environments. Coggle (1993: 45) describes how both variants of /l/ in RP can be found when the word *little* is pronounced [ˈlɪtɫ].

As stated above, the initial /l/ in *little* is prevocalic, hence it is a clear [l]. The second /l/ is a velarised [ɫ], also known as dark [ɫ]. The dark [ɫ] is pronounced with the back of the tongue towards the velum, which gives it a resemblance to back vowels. The tendency now is that the dark [ɫ] has become so dark that it is vocalised and pronounced with a back, close vowel such as [ʊ,o]. Hence, L-vocalisation can only occur in environments with dark [ɫ]. In his discussion of L-vocalisation, Wells mentions the implications L-vocalisation might have on the vowel system.

According to Wells (1982: 259), there might be a need for a reorganisation of the vowel system as it is likely that L-vocalisation will, at some point in the future, introduce two new diphthongs, namely, [ɪʊ] and [ɛʊ] in words such as *thrill, film, help, shelf, etc*.

L-vocalisation has its origins in the Cockney accent. It has traditionally been regarded a low status, stigmatised feature. However, L-vocalisation has been, and still is, spreading to the surrounding counties and throughout England (Wells 1982: 259). In his study of southeastern English, Torgersen (1997: 75) found that L-vocalisation has spread to 'large areas outside its traditional dialect area'. He found that most of his informants had L-vocalisation. L-vocalisation was also a frequent feature with the older speakers. Furthermore, he found that L-vocalisation was slightly less frequent in word-list style, which could indicate social stigma attached to the feature. The rapid spread of L-vocalisation has resulted in increased acceptance even by some RP-speakers. Traditionally, L-vocalisation was seen as a low-status feature and did not occur in RP, this is now changing. Over the last decades, this stigma has been reduced and Wells (1982: 259) claims that L-vocalisation might become a feature of standard English. L- vocalisation is one of the features that are typically used by Estuary English-speakers, as Estuary English lies along the continuum between RP and Cockney.

3.4 R-fronting

R-fronting, or R-labialisation, refers to the phenomenon where the phoneme /r/ is realised as a labiodental approximant [ʋ], which leads to pronunciations such as [ʋɛd] instead of [ɹɛd]. R-fronting is often associated with Cockney, but seems to be spreading throughout the southeast. Using a labiodental approximant instead of the traditional post-alveolar approximant was previously considered a speech defect or a sign of immature speech found with small children. However, according to recent research, the labiodental approximant now seems to be gaining acceptance as an accent feature in the non-standard accents of southeastern England (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 30). The talk show host Jonathan Ross is a good example of how R-fronting is a becoming a more accepted variant (Marsden 2006: 1). The use of [ʋ] among media personalities has increased significantly. This may be a contributing factor to its acceptance and the reduction of stigmatisation attached to the feature. However, R-fronting is still used in films and TV-series as an accent feature of characters that are ridiculed.

R-fronting was first mentioned in *Pegge's Anecdotes of the English Language* in 1844, where it was mentioned as a speech defect (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 31). Wells (1982: 282) comments on the variant in his discussion of upper crust-RP. He claims that it is an 'upper-class affectation' (ibid.) used by upper crust-RP speakers who want to sound more posh. However, in the same discussion, Wells is 'not convinced that it is nowadays found more frequently among upper-class speakers than among those of other social classes' (ibid.). Later research shows that he was right in his assumption that the feature has spread to other social classes. However, it seems that age is a slightly more relevant factor than class in the case of R-fronting as it has spread throughout

England in the speech of younger speakers (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 33). In their study of Derby and Newcastle, Foulkes & Docherty (2000) found higher scores for [ʊ] in Derby than in Newcastle, which is not surprising as Derby is closer to London. Although they found that in both cities younger speakers and working-class speakers show the highest frequency of[ʊ], their results must be considered as tentative.

Foulkes & Docherty suggest that the spread of the labiodental approximant correlates with the ongoing process of dialect levelling in southeastern England. They claim that the way [ʊ] is spreading is similar to that of TH-fronting and T-glottaling (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 34). Their claim is supported by Williams & Kerswill (1999: 147) in their study of dialect levelling in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull, where [ʊ] is a common feature among children and young adults. Studies such as Trudgill's study of the Norwich accent (1999) and Torgersen's study of southeastern accents (1997) give further support to the evidence of the spread of [ʊ] among younger speakers, the majority being female speakers. Nødtvedt (2011) investigated the Cockney accent for his MA-thesis. In the case of R-fronting he found an average percentage score of 46% for [ʊ] with the younger informants (Nødtvedt 2011: 68).

3.5 Yod-Coalescence

The term Yod-coalescence refers to the process where the alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ + the palatal approximant /j/ are coalesced and pronounced as the palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ and/dʒ/ (Hannisdal 2006: 120). Hence, Yod-coalescence is the pronunciation of [tʃ] and [dʒ] for /tj/ and /dj/ in words such as *tune* [tʃuːn] and *dew* [dʒuː]. In his discussion of coalescence Cruttenden (2008: 302) includes /s/ and /z/ in addition to /t/ and /d/+/j/. However, the present study will focus on Yod-coalescence with /t/+/j /and /d/+/j/ only. I will focus on coalescence in stressed environments, and in word initial and word-internal positions. The variables investigated in this study are (tj) and (dj). The variants of (tj) and (dj) are /tj, tʃ/ and /dj, dʒ/ respectively.

Yod-coalescence has been an ongoing process in British English for a long time, though it is only in the last 50 years it has really caught on. It started in unstressed syllables, but it is now found in both stressed and unstressed syllables (Glain 2012: 8). Traditionally, Cockney had Yod-dropping where the yod was completely dropped so that words such as *tune* and *dune* were pronounced [tuːn] and [duːn]. However, a shift occurred in the environments of /t/ and /d/ so that instead of dropping the yod, it coalesced with the preceding sound. Yod-coalescence can also be found in three different phonological environments: 1. Across word boundaries. 2. In word-internal positions. and 3. In word-initial positions.

The status of Yod-coalescence seems to be a debatable topic. On the one hand, Rosewarne claims that the coalesced variants will become the preferred variants. As Yod-coalescence has become an accepted feature in both informal RP and Cockney it is, according to Rosewarne (1994: 5), most likely that /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ will replace /tj/ and /dj/ in the future. On the other hand, Upton & Widdowson (2006: 63) argue that the reason why palato-alveolar affricates have not

caught on as a universal feature of British English is a matter of spelling. Furthermore they do not seem as certain that the coalesced variants will replace the non-coalesced variants. Upton & Widdowson (2006: 61) claim that 'speakers appreciate that the word is not spelt with *ch* and are therefore reluctant to pronounce it with a [tʃ] sound, and the [tj] ... is perpetuated in a community'. According to Wells (2008: xiii), Yod-coalescence can now be considered an established feature of informal RP. Rosewarne also argues that Yod-coalescence in word-internal positions, before a stressed vowel, is becoming a feature of RP (Rosewarne 1994: 5). Coggle (1993: 51) recognises Yod-coalescence mainly as a feature of Estuary English, though he mentions it as an incoming feature of Cockney and RP. Although Yod-coalescence is a relatively new feature and an incoming feature of RP and Cockney, it has existed in Surrey for a long time (Wells 1982: 331 with reference to Wright 1905). Thus, yod-coalescence may have spread from Surrey into London English.

3.6 Upspeak

The intonational phenomenon *upspeak* is also known as *uptalk* or, in linguistic terms, *the high rising terminal*. Traditionally in RP, a statement has a fall, i.e. a falling tone at the end such as 'I'm a customer ↘service agent' (Wells 2006: 37). Instead of the traditional fall, the emerged variant, upspeak, has a rise at the end of a declarative statement such as 'I'm a customer ↗service agent' (ibid.). Thus, the nucleus of a tone unit has a rise instead of a fall. There is no exact time as to when it originated. Although, Wells (2006: 37) claims it emerged around 1980. Upspeak is primarily used by speakers born in the 1980s or later, though it may occur occasionally among older speakers as well.

The reason why upspeak is so salient is that a statement ends up sounding like a question. The speaker may be perceived as very indecisive or insecure. Consequently, upspeak is often ridiculed in the media. The conventional use of a statement is to give information, and older speakers tend to find upspeak inappropriate. The feature is believed to have originated in New Zealand or Australia, though today it is also found in many states in the USA (Bradford 1997: 29). Upspeak is also frequently used in cities such as Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and Newcastle (Cruttenden 2008: 289). The comedy TV-series *Little Britain* is a TV-series, which parodies stereotypical British people. The TV-series has included a character, a teenage girl, who is known for her use of upspeak. The decision to include this character shows that upspeak has caught the British people's attention. Upspeak is one of the factors used to ridicule the character.

According to Bradford (1997: 33), a common explanation for the increasing use of upspeak is TV-soaps. Australian soaps such as *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* are often blamed for influencing British speakers, though British TV-soaps such as *Brookside* can also be blamed (ibid.). Bradford (1997: 34) further proposes two counterarguments to the explanation of TV-series as an influencing factor. Her first argument is that if Australian soaps were to influence British speakers the vowels would also have been influenced. Her second argument is that she

has ‘personal experience’ of a 23-year old girl and the girl’s peers who, despite having watched the soaps mentioned, did not use upspeak during the period they watched the soaps. However, the girl did use upspeak after returning from a trip abroad (Bradford 1997: 34).

Intonation is an important feature in discourse. How we say things may be just as important as what we actually say. Tones may be divided into two categories: final falls and final rises. The final falls include falls and rise-falls (Bradford 1997: 34). The final rises include rises and fall-rises (ibid.). The falls can be classified as ‘*proclaiming*’, while the rises can be classified as ‘*referring*’ (Bradford 1997: 34, emphasis in original). The function of falls in statements is to signal new information whereas the rises are used when the speaker wishes to create good-will and convergence among the speakers (ibid.). Tomlinson Jr. & Fox Tree (2011) suggest two reasons for why a speaker might use upspeak. Their first argument is that upspeak is used if the speaker wishes to indicate that he or she is unsure of whether the content of the statement is true. They refer to this as a ‘*backward-looking* function’, focusing on the already stated utterance (Tomlinson Jr. & Fox Tree 2011: 58, emphasis in original). Their second argument is that the speaker believes what is being said, but cannot provide information supporting his or her claim (ibid.). This is referred to as a ‘*forward-looking* function’, which focuses on the following utterance (ibid., emphasis in original).

According to Tomlinson Jr. & Fox Tree (2011: 59), upspeak has been discarded as meaningless by theoreticians. Bradford, however, proposes two communicative purposes for upspeak. The first is its affective dimension, i.e. upspeak is seen as a bonding technique. Using upspeak makes the listener perceive the speaker as less authorative, i.e. less ‘bossy’, which is likely to reduce the social distance among the speakers. The second suggestion is that upspeak is used when new information is presented as something of mutual interest (Bradford 1997: 34). Upspeak also functions as a way of gaining assurance. The rise may be added as a way of checking that the listener is paying attention or as a way of verifying that the listener actually understands what is being talked about (Cruttenden 2008: 289). Tomlinson Jr. & Fox Tree (2011: 60) refer to what they call off-line studies where the results indicate that upspeak is used to signal uncertainty, but also continuity in discourse. Upspeak seems to be used primarily by young females, though it is an increasing feature among young males as well (Bradford 1997: 35).

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three main parts: sampling, data collection and the auditory analysis. Additionally, the concept of the linguistic variable and quantitative sociolinguistics will be given a thorough explanation. The first part will explain the term sampling and how it is relevant to the present study. The section on sampling will also give an overview of how the informants were found and classified. The second part will give a presentation of the term data collection and the methods used when conducting the present study. The last part will provide a discussion of the auditory analysis and how the tokens were classified. It will also include a section explaining how the social variables age and gender are relevant in relation to the analyses. The section dealing with social variables will also provide a definition of the term lower-middle class.

4.2 Sampling

In the earlier stages of sociolinguistics there existed a belief that the ideal, 'pure' speaker could be found, a speaker without any variation who spoke the accent perfectly (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 23). However, no such speaker can be found. Interspeaker and intraspeaker variation will always exist depending on factors such as gender, age, network, and class.

William Labov experienced great success with his pioneering ways to account for these extra-linguistic variables when conducting a sociolinguistic study. Most central is the belief in the social and linguistic functionality of variation (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 23). It is not sufficient to study a speech community and draw conclusions without examining the different types of data. In order to get representative results the sociolinguist must, according to Milroy & Gordon (2003: 24), obtain data that represent both the different types of speech within one speaker and different types of speakers.

The process of finding, classifying and selecting speakers is known as *sampling*. The issue of representativeness should be one of the main concerns in a sociolinguistic study. The informants must be representative of the speech community. For example, if the aim is to investigate female

middle-class speakers in Surrey, the researcher has to ensure that the informants come from the relevant area and belong to the relevant class. In order to see if a variety is undergoing a change both younger and older informants should be included. Milroy & Gordon (2003: 24) point out that avoidance of bias is the key to achieving representativeness. The speakers included must fit the requirements set by the sociolinguist. If they do not match, they should be excluded as they would shed light on irrelevant aspects and give misleading results. The sociolinguist may choose to conduct a *random sample* or a *judgement sample*. Milroy & Gordon (2003: 25) claim that the main principle behind a random sample is 'that anyone within the sample frame has an equal chance of being selected'. The sample frame is any list where informants can be found by chance such as electoral lists, phone registers, etc.

The present study has followed the principles underlying judgement sampling. In advance of the fieldwork, the sampling universe has to be delineated, i.e. the criteria for classifying informants that would be suitable for the study had to be defined. After the criteria for finding and classifying informants have been created, the researcher has to decide on a number of informants to include and fill the quota. Based on previous studies concerning accent variation and change, the speakers considered most relevant were females and males, young and old speakers, and speakers from the same social class. The class chosen for the present study was the *lower-middle class* (see further 4.5). A combination of these factors will provide an overview and some indications of how the accent has changed through time and whether there are important gender differences. Because this is a small-scale study there was not time, nor space to compare classes. My aim was to include at least four in each cell, i.e. four younger girls, four older women, four younger boys, and four older men. The present study is based on data collected from 16 informants. In a small-scale sociolinguistic study this is considered an acceptable number. Since linguistic behaviour is relatively stable, compared to other sciences, a great number of informants is redundant (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 28-29). As with random samples, judgement samples cannot guarantee 100% representativeness. Acquiring 100% representativeness is, strictly speaking, almost impossible. However, with a judgement sample the researcher can, to a certain extent, control the influencing factors and decide what should be considered relevant and irrelevant.

4.2.1 Finding informants

Finding informants is rarely an easy task. A natural place to start looking for younger people would be schools and universities. However, I did not do that, as I had learned from previous students that schools rarely take the time to respond to enquiries of this kind. Since I have family in Surrey, I decided to rely on their contacts and knowledge of where to look for informants. This strategy is often referred to as the *snowball technique* (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 32). The theory behind the snowball technique, also known as network sampling, is that it 'utilizes the social networks of participants in the study to recruit potential new participants' (ibid.). The interviews with speaker 5, 15 and 16 were arranged through my aunt's friends. Speaker 15 kindly arranged an interview with speaker 13, who was a friend of hers. This allows the researcher to adopt a

'friend of a friend'-role which may help reduce the formality of the interview. Speaker 16 was 17 years old at the time the interview was conducted. This is not ideal as the issue of parental consent may cause some difficulties, but the interview took place in her home with her parents present. Parental consent was also given in writing. Furthermore, the NSD, Norwegian Social Science Data Services, states that children over 15 are allowed to participate in studies where the data collected do not contain any sensitive information. Additionally, I was advised to contact a day centre for elderly people. The manager there was extremely helpful and speaker 2, 3 and 4 were interviewed there. Finding the rest of the informants, i.e. those that were complete strangers, was extremely difficult. The younger informants were especially hard to find, as people aged 19-25 often move to go to universities in other counties.

Although every person approached agreed to participate in the study, there were few who were actually suitable according to the predefined extra-linguistic criteria. One factor contributing to much frustration was people's definition of where they are from. Several people agreed to participate after having explicitly confirmed that they were born and raised in Surrey. However, during the interview they would say that they did not actually grow up in Surrey. One example is an 80 year old lady who confirmed that she was from Surrey. She claimed to be both born and raised in Surrey. Halfway through the interview she said that she was from Sheffield and had lived in Surrey for about 10 years. All informants signed a consent form that informed them of their rights as participants. It also gave a very short summary of the project. The sampling was carried out in October 2013. The informants were not paid to participate in the study.

The informants were informed that the study was concerned with language variation and change in southeastern British English. Ideally, the informants of a study focusing on phonology should not be told that the focus is on phonology, as a means of reducing the attention to speech. These guidelines were followed when conducting the present study. However, in some cases, for example, if the informant is sceptical or extremely curious, it is nearly unavoidable not to specify the aim of the study without being perceived as rude or lying. In the present study, the researcher experienced that some of the informants were extremely curious about the project and in these cases, it was sometimes necessary to tell the informants that it was a study concerning accents. This was, however, only mentioned in a brief manner and not explained any further. Although *the Observer's Paradox* (see further 4.4) can never be completely escaped, the aim is to reduce the effects to a minimum. Being interviewed and recorded by a stranger can be quite uncomfortable, thus, it is important that the researcher is friendly, flexible, and open-minded as this will be helpful in getting the informants to relax.

4.2.2 Classifying informants

The decision to include both sexes and compare two age groups was made because the aim of the study is to provide an accurate and overall view of the ongoing changes. Furthermore, it also aims to provide an overview of the status of the variables and variants investigated. My sample consists primarily of lower-middle class males and females who were born and raised in

Surrey. I have included males and females, as both genders are needed in order to see if there are any gender differences. In cases where there might be an ongoing change related to gender, the women will often be leading the change (cf. 2.2.2). The age groups compared in the present study are speakers aged 17-23 and speakers aged 66-87. As previously mentioned, there was not enough time or space to include a comparison across classes. As my contacts in Surrey can be classified as middle-class, I chose to focus on obtaining data from lower-middle class speakers (see further 4.5).

The last criterion my informants had to fit into was whether they were born and raised in Surrey. Although one can never be 100% sure that the informants' accents are not influenced by other accents, it is preferable that their parents are also born and raised in Surrey. Such informants are, however, extremely hard to find, especially with the increased mobility England has seen the last 50-100 years. Thus, the criterion that my informants had to be born and raised in Surrey, or at least raised from the stage of infancy was considered sufficient. It is an important criterion as people's accents are often influenced by their peers and other people around them. If a person had been born and raised in another part of England or another country for the first years of his or her life, the person's accent would most likely be influenced by this, which would make him or her less suitable for a study of the Surrey accent. A short presentation of my informants will be given in table 4.1 and 4.2.[2]

2. Speakers 7 and 8 were somewhat reluctant to talk about age. Hence, I only know that they are over 80 years old.

Table 4.1: Older informants

OLDER MALES

Speaker nr.	Age	Education and occupation	Background
Speaker 1	72	College. Worked for a multinational company. Retired	Born and raised in Godalming. Lived abroad (various places) for 20 years due to work.
Speaker 2	80	College. Worked a supervisor for a security company. Retired.	Born and raised in Guildford.
Speaker 3	87	College. Worked as an electrical engineer. Retired.	Born and raised in Milford.
Speaker 4	85	College. Worked as an aircraft engineer. Retired.	Born and raised in Godalming, lived most of his life in Chiddingfold and Farncombe.

OLDER FEMALES

Speaker nr.	Age	Education and occupation	Background
Speaker 5	70	College. Worked as a pharmacist. Retired	Born and raised in Witley.
Speaker 6	66	College. Worked as an accountant for a building company. Retired	Born and raised in Witley.
Speaker 7	80+	Worked as a book keeper. Retired	Born and raised in Guildford.
Speaker 8	80+	Worked as a library assistant. Retired	Born and raised in Guildford.

Table 4.2: Younger informants

YOUNG MALES

Speaker nr.	Age	Education and occupation	Background
Speaker 9	23	College. He has decided on a career in promoting Fair trade coffee.	Born in London. Left London as a baby. He was raised in Milford. Parents were born and raised in Surrey.
Speaker 10	22	College. Studying business and finance at a university in West Sussex.	Born and raised in Godalming. Parents were born and raised in Surrey.
Speaker 11	21	College. Worked as manager for John Lewis, now manager at Waitrose.	Born and raised in Elstead. Parents were born and raised in Surrey.
Speaker 12	21	College. Works as an electrician.	Born outside Surrey, raised in Godalming since baby stage. One parent was born and raised in Surrey.

YOUNG FEMALES

Speaker nr.	Age	Education and occupation	Background
Speaker 13	18	College. Works as manager at Superdrug. Wants to work her way up.	Born and raised in Godalming. Parents were born and raised in Surrey. Did not want to spend money on university.
Speaker14	23	College. Works part time in a pub in Witley. She wants to be a nurse.	Born and raised in Witley. Just moved to West Sussex. Parents were born and raised in Surrey.
Speaker 15	18	College. Works as a hairdressing apprentice.	Born in Lancaster, raised in Witley since baby stage. One parent is born and raised in Surrey.
Speaker 16	17	She is in her second year of college. She wants to go to university and get an art degree.	Born in South Africa, moved to Elstead when she was nine months. Her parents are not from Surrey.

4.3 Quantitative sociolinguistics

A central concept in a sociolinguistic study is the *linguistic variable*. The linguistic variable is often defined as 'a linguistic unit with two or more variants involved in covariation with other social and/or linguistic variables' (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 50). Linguistic variables that refer to pronunciation are typically referred to as phonological variables. However, according to Hudson (1996: 170), different types of variables can be distinguished based on the level of language. Hudson further claims that the terms *phonological variables* and *phonetic variables* are separate variables. However, as most sociolinguistic studies focus on either phonological or phonetic variation Hudson (1996: 172-173) suggests that we 'lump them together as "pronunciation variables"'. In the present study, both phonological and phonetic variation will be referred to as phonological variables.

Each of the linguistic variables has one or more variants. In a quantitative sociolinguistic study, the researcher wants to see how the variables vary, and which variants are used the most and least. Quantification is crucial when interpreting the results to ascertain whether a feature is changing or not. After the quantification, the results will be examined in relation to the extra-linguistic variables to see if they correlate. For example, by comparing the quantified data with the extra-linguistic variables, we can find out whether a variant is used mainly by men or women, or whether a variant is found more frequently with younger people or older people. Although there were linguists who conducted quantitative studies in sociolinguistics before Labov, Labov is often referred to as the first linguist to study sociolinguistics quantitatively. Today, most sociolinguistic studies follow the Labovian research paradigm (Hudson 1996: 150). After the data have been collected, and the variables and variants identified, the linguist must process the figures. When processing the figures, the researcher must count each token of the identified variants of each variable. After the tokens are counted, they are usually reduced to percentage scores due to convenience, as percentage scores are easier to compare. The danger of percentage scores is that the results give no information about the number of how many tokens that are actually counted. Percentage scores do not tell us whether the linguist has counted 10, 100, or 1000 tokens.

In his discussion of quantification, Hudson mentions two approaches to calculating scores. The first approach is the Labovian approach where 'a score is calculated for each linguistic variable in each part of the collected data' (Hudson 1996: 175). The variants of a variable are assigned a score. The scores are then added together and the answer is divided on the total number of variants found. The score we are left with is the score for the variable in the part of data concerned, e.g. age or gender. The second approach Hudson mentions is to produce averages for groups of individuals. The individuals are grouped together and the score for the group is seen as one single speaker (Hudson 1996: 178). Hudson admits that this approach is not ideal as it conceals individual variation within the groups (ibid.). A third method of quantification is to include both individual scores and group scores. The third method is the method chosen for the present study.

4.4 Data Collection

The term *data collection* is used when referring to the process of eliciting relevant data from informants. In their chapter on data collection, Milroy & Gordon (2003) discuss some of the problems a sociolinguist might encounter when he or she is collecting data. The question of how to obtain data is a rather important question that has to be considered carefully. There are various ways to do so, and they all have different advantages and disadvantages depending on the research objectives. The approach chosen is guided by the research aims. Traditionally, sociolinguists have been most interested in data representing the spontaneous, everyday usage, which is often referred to as *the vernacular* (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 49). Thus, data on speakers' perception of mergers have to be collected in a different way than data representing the vernacular, i.e. 'the style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech' (Labov 1972: 208). The researcher must consider if he or she can be sure that the data are not influenced by the 'process of investigation itself' (Wardhaugh 2010: 156). As the linguist rarely is a part of the community, obtaining unmonitored speech can be quite difficult, as the speakers will be affected by the situation to some extent. Many people tend to be more cautious if the interviewer is a stranger or by the fact that they are being recorded. This dilemma has been defined by Labov (1972: 209) as: *the Observer's Paradox* 'the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation'. The Observer's Paradox can never be completely escaped. Consequently, methods to reduce the effects of the Observer's Paradox such as group interviews and the *danger of death*-question have been developed. These methods will be further discussed in 4.4.1-2.

4.4.1 The sociolinguistic interview

Conducting a sociolinguistic interview is one of the most common ways of eliciting speech data. A sociolinguistic interview is usually a one-on-one situation, though sometimes the linguist may choose to conduct a group interview. In the present study, I have conducted both one-on-one interviews and group interviews. The structure of a sociolinguistic interview is relatively loose. The topics and questions will often be modified towards the target group. For example, in an interview with adolescents, questions concerning taxes will are less likely to get the informants to talk endlessly about the topic, whereas asking questions about school or spare time might elicit longer stretches of speech. The sociolinguistic interview is often chosen as it is a good way of eliciting long stretches of 'unscripted, conversational speech' (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 58). According to Milroy & Gordon (ibid.), 'the basic objective has often been to observe the subject's relaxed, "natural" usage'. Although the speech will be unscripted, it will not be quite as unmonitored as relaxed, conversational speech, at least not in the beginning of the interview where the informant tends to be somewhat self-conscious.

The length of a sociolinguistic interview varies from 30 minutes and up to two hours. On the

one hand, it has been suggested by Labov that 'interviewers should obtain from one to two hours of speech from each speaker' (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 58 with reference to Labov 1984: 32). On the other hand, others state that 30 minutes is enough (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 58). Another important point to note is that the interviewer should not drag out the interview just to get a certain amount of speech. This could result in an awkward situation and answers being given in a short and/or annoyed manner. Such answers do not provide representative data of relaxed speech. However, in order to get a thorough overview of the accent, the interview should be as long as possible. In the present study, my aim was to obtain at least 30 minutes of speech from each speaker.

Conducting a sociolinguistic interview is useful as the interview has potential to develop into a conversation instead of an interview. The linguist is responsible for steering and keeping the interview going, for example, by having an endless list of questions. This is especially important when interviewing complete strangers, as the interviewer has absolutely no knowledge of the informants' interests or experiences in life. Labov suggests that to elicit unmonitored speech the interviewer could ask what he calls the danger of death-question. In theory, this should get the informants emotionally involved and 'more concerned with what they say instead of how they say it '(Milroy & Gordon 2003: 65). Obviously, the danger of death-question is designed to ask whether the informant has ever feared for his or her life. Milroy & Gordon argue that this might not be the best way to elicit speech. Although Labov experienced it as successful, other researchers have experienced it as unsuccessful for various reasons (ibid.). It is also a quite personal question. Several of my informants accepted to participate in the present study as long as I did *not* ask any personal questions.

As the interview often is conducted on a one-on-one basis and the informant is often a stranger, the interviewer can never be 100% sure that the informant is not putting on an accent or modifying salient stigmatised features. One way of avoiding this, or at least reducing the chances of such cases, is to conduct group interviews. Interviewing two or more people who already know each other will decrease the likelihood of anyone speaking in a different manner than normal. If one of the interviewees avoids or adds features that are not a part of their everyday speech, the others will be able to comment on it. Another great advantage of group interviews is that because the interviewees are talking to each other, perhaps even more so than to the interviewer, the informants' focus will shift from the recorder to the conversation. In most cases the informants will then, to a certain extent, be less aware of the fact that they are being recorded. This increases the chances of obtaining free, conversational speech data. Labov et al conducted group interviews for their study of Harlem speech (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 66). They found that the role of the interviewer decreased and the interviewees talked to each other instead. During my interview with speaker 10, 11 and 12, they frequently forgot that I was recording them, even though the recorder was lying visibly on the table. Several times they would start talking about a subject and after a while one of them remembered why I was there and asked 'are you recording this?'. Milroy & Gordon (ibid.) refer to Labov et al's study of Harlem speech, claiming that it

is unlikely that the informants will forget that they are being recorded. However, in Labov et al's study, the informants were wearing microphones around their neck. Obviously, wearing a microphone is more noticable than a recorder on a table.

Time and location of the interview may also be influential factors. As opposed to Labov et al's study, my group interviews were conducted in pubs and restaurants during evenings. One important critical point concerning group interviews is that the interviewees will lose the role as respondents, and the internal structure of the group will control the language behaviour (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 67). Although there are many advantages to the sociolinguistic interview as a way of obtaining speech data, the structure of an interview makes it difficult to elicit relevant tokens. The interviewer can ask questions about a topic and hope that the informant will answer by using words that will elicit relevant tokens. However, the interviewer cannot control this and may, in a worst case scenario, end up with an interview without relevant tokens of the variables he or she was looking for.

4.4.2 Reading style

Some variables can be quite difficult to obtain relevant tokens of through interviews. In order to elicit relevant tokens, the researcher may choose to ask the informant to read a short text, a list of sentences, minimal pairs, or a word list. The informants in the current study were given two reading tasks. For the purpose of the present study, I had designed a short text about a British rock band, The Cure, as one of my variables is the lexical set CURE. I had also prepared a list of 22 sentences containing words that would elicit relevant tokens. The text about The Cure was primarily based on a Wikipedia article about the band. I made some minor changes so that I could insert relevant words. My informants were informed, after reading the text, that the content had been slightly altered. Asking the informants to read passages designed for the study is a good way of ensuring that the informants produce relevant tokens. Reading tasks do, however, not represent the vernacular speech. Reading aloud may make the informants stressed or cause them to feel anxious and increase their self-consciousness. Thus, resulting in the informants using more standard features. Producing unclear speech may also be a result of nervousness. Reading tasks also carry with them the risk of influencing speech by how the words are written. Although this is primarily a problem regarding minimal pairs, where two words that are pronounced in the same way end up being pronounced in slightly different ways because they are spelled differently.

4.5 Social variables

I have analysed and quantified the linguistic variables in relation to the extra-linguistic variables age and gender. In the UK, it is often interesting to include class in sociolinguistic studies. Unfortunately, there was not time or space to include another extra-linguistic variable in the present study. Assigning informants into strict categories is hard as there are so many different criteria

to consider. Education is often considered an important criterion when defining class, and most definitions of the middle-class include university education as a criterion. However, occupation and income are also equally important criteria regarding class. This raises an important issue that must be considered when the researcher is defining the different classes, namely, the inconsistency between education, occupation and income. An electrician who attended to college, followed by an apprenticeship, is likely to earn more money than a professor with a long university education. As there is not always a clear correlation between these factors, it is quite difficult to delineate strict and clear cut categories. Thus, the researcher must choose which factors to include in the definitions. In the UK, the term *college* is used to refer to secondary schools where the students have to pay fees. Therefore, it is reasonable to group those that have attended college as lower-middle class or middle-class. The informants included in the present study have been classified as lower-middle class on the basis of six criteria:

1. Most of my informants live in Surrey, which is one of the UK's richest counties, and can afford it without any great problems.[3] [4]

2. Except for those who were retired, all of the informants had jobs with the possibility of working their way up. Some of the informants were undergoing university education.

3. All informants have attended college.

4. They all defined themselves as being in the middle of the social scale. They clearly distinguished themselves from both poor and rich people.

5. Many of the young informants knew each other either by family relations or from childhood. This means that they attended the same schools, and grew up in the same neighbourhoods, i.e. it is natural to categorise them into the same class.

6. Not all informants spoke of their neighbourhoods, but those who did explicitly stated that they did not live in 'the bad areas of Surrey'.

In order to get an overview of the status and development of the linguistic variables and variants, I have quantified the distribution of the linguistic variants and compared the results of the two age groups to see how the usage patterns correlate with age. Differences between the two age groups will be interpreted as evidence of ongoing change, in accordance with the principles of the apparent-time hypothesis. As with the extra-linguistic variable age, I have compared the results of the quantification process to see whether there is any correlation to gender. This will indicate whether a change is led by males or females, or if a feature is avoided by males or females.

3. Speaker 14 had just moved to West Sussex because housing is cheaper there. She wanted a house, but did not want to work full-time.

4. Speaker 10 is currently living in another county, but plans on moving back to Surrey.

4.6 The auditory analysis

The recorder used for the present study was a Roland R-05 wave/MP3 recorder. The recorder has a high-sensitivity, built in microphone designed to record meetings. This means that voices that were somewhat faint or distant could be heard clearly, which was a great advantage during the group interviews. The recordings were saved to a SD-card and transferred to a computer via a memory card reader. The recordings were then transcribed orthographically to make the identification of tokens easier. It is also very helpful to have the recordings in writing when carrying out the auditory analysis. The data consist of approximately 36 195 words.

The data have been analysed auditorily. This means that the researcher has to rely on his or her judgement of what he or she is able to hear. Vowels are the most difficult variables to analyse. They can be described as lying along a continuum of sounds without clear-cut boundaries. Vowels are therefore categorised as continuous variables. It is necessary that the researcher has delineated boundaries, and has a clear definition of which realisations should be counted as which variants. Consonants are categorised as discrete variables. The variants of a consonant variable are relatively easy to hear. In some cases it may be a matter of presence or absence of a sound such as [h] in [ˈhæpən] or [ˈæpən] (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 144). As the researcher has to rely solely on his or her own perception, there is always the risk of something being misinterpreted or left out, which could skew the results somewhat. However, by listening through the recordings a number of times, the researcher will learn how to recognise the variables and their variants (ibid.). Though that is not to say that minor mishearings do not occur. There is also the risk of bias either because the researcher wants to find something new or because the researcher is influenced by the orthographic transcriptions. One should always try to avoid such situations. The speech material in the present study was analysed by repeated listening of the recordings. Additionally, parts of the analyses have been controlled and approved by my supervisor. She has listened through the amount of data needed to ensure that there is a high degree of stability in the analyses. By having a trained person control check the analyses, the risks of mishearings and bias are reduced.

4.7 Token classification

After the data had been analysed, each token of the relevant variables was counted. According to *the principle of accountability*, every token of a variable should be counted (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 163). However, in a small-scale study such as the present study it would be very time-consuming to count every instance. My aim was therefore to include 50 tokens of each variable for each speaker. This choice was based on the fact that linguistic behaviour is relatively stable, and a higher number of tokens would be redundant in a small-scale study. Milroy & Gordon refer to Guy who suggests that '30 tokens per variable is a reasonable objective' (2003: 164 with reference to Guy 1980, 1993). Guy further claims that there is 100% conformity with the

predicted norm when 35 tokens are included. Thus, the decision to include 50 tokens should be adequate for the purpose of the present study, and the chances of random fluctuation are reduced. In order to avoid skewed results, I did not count more than 10 instances of the same word. Milroy & Gordon (2003: 163) claim that 'imposing limits such as these helps to ensure that the description of each subject's speech is based on a lexically varied sample which, in turn, should represent a greater diversity of phonological events'. Some of the variables I examined do not occur frequently in everyday speech and 50 tokens were impossible to find. In those cases, I included as many tokens as possible. The tokens were then assigned to different categories. For example, tokens of L-vocalisation were assigned into the categories *dark* [ɬ] or *vocalised* [ʊ]. Tokens that were unclear and impossible to identify due to background noise, speech rate, mumbling, loose dentures, etc., were excluded from the analyses.

4.7.1 CURE-lowering

In the analysis of CURE-lowering, I have identified all tokens of the three different variants of the variable (ʊə). The three variants were [ʊə], [ʊː] and [ɔː]. Relevant tokens were found in words such as *cure, poor, insurance, etc*. Tokens that were ambiguous and could not be easily assigned to one of the mentioned categories were excluded. I have only included the tokens that were found in stressed syllables. I focused on lexical words only and did not include grammatical words. As tokens of CURE-words are relatively rare in everyday speech, I did not find 50 tokens for every speaker.

4.7.2 L-vocalisation

I have identified and analysed all tokens where /l/ occurred in non-prevocalic environments, i.e. before consonants and prepausally. The variants of the variable are [ɬ] and [ʊ]. As it is very hard to hear L-vocalisation after back and rounded vowels, I only considered syllabic /l/ and /l/ after front and unrounded vowels as potential tokens of L-vocalisation. Relevant words for L-vocalisation in the present study were words such as *feel, will, expelled, etc*. Words with a back and rounded vowel such as *school, alternative, etc.,* were not included. One speaker actually vocalised her /l/ and pronounced her /l/ as a dark [ɬ], i.e. *middle* was pronounced as [ˈmɪdʊɬ]. Although it is an interesting observation, it could not be identified as either vocalised or non-vocalised /l/. Hence, it was not included in the analysis. There were also other problematic cases that were excluded, such as instances of sloppy speech and tokens that were unclear because of background noise.

4.7.3 R-fronting

In the analysis of R-fronting, the relevant environments were word-initial /r/ and intervocalic /r/. Relevant tokens of R-fronting were found in words such as *release, current, rock, perry, etc.*

Tokens of /r/ in other environments such as after consonants were not included, as the realisation of /r/ after consonants is much more difficult to identify. The tokens were analysed as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] or as a labiodental approximant [ʋ].

4.7.4 Yod-coalescence

The tokens I identified as relevant of Yod-coalescence were divided into binary categories for both (tj) and (dj), i.e. coalesced and non-coalesced. This means that a token of (tj) could be categorised as either [tj] or [tʃ] and a token of (dj) could be categorised as [dj] or [dʒ]. Relevant words for Yod-coalescence were words such as *tuna, students, tunes, duke, duty, produced, etc.* In the few cases where the speakers had yod-dropping, the tokens were assigned to the category non-coalesced. Ambiguous tokens were not included. The relevant environments for yod-coalescence are word-initial and word-internal stressed syllables.

4.7.5 Upspeak

The rises counted as tokens of upspeak were found in environments that could be classified syntactically as final and semantically as statements. I have taken context into consideration to ensure that non-final statements and ambiguous statements, i.e. statements that could be an invitation, were not classified as upspeak. A rise can signal continuation or non-finality, in which case the rise is not considered upspeak. I have listened to every statement and analysed whether the statement had a fall or a rise on the nucleus. Only the statements which were completely unambiguous, final statements with a rise on the nucleus were considered as tokens of upspeak. For example, in an interview with two young men, one of the men uttered a statement that *could* be an invitation. Invitations are not considered final statements. As I could not know exactly what he meant, it was not considered a token of upspeak. However, statements such as 'they're like the first rock band that I got ↗into' were considered upspeak.

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the analyses via tables and diagrams followed by a discussion of the results for each linguistic variable. The present study is a sociolinguistic study focusing on phonology. It has investigated the speech of the lower-middle class in Surrey. As most small-scale accent studies, the present study is an apparent-time study. The results have been collected from two different age groups at one point in time and compared as representing two different points in time. A synchronic approach is often the method best suited for small-scale studies such as the current study.

The linguistic variables will be listed in the same order as in the previous chapters. The linguistic variables will be presented with a brief introduction of their status and their variants. This will be followed by a presentation of the findings, and a discussion of the results. The results for each variable will be presented in a table, which will provide the total number of tokens (*N*), and the number of tokens for each variant included in the analysis. The table will also provide percentage scores for the age groups *younger informants* and *older informants*. Three diagrams will be given for each variable in the results section. The first diagram will illustrate the results in relation to the extra-linguistic variable age, the second diagram will provide the individual percentage scores, and the third diagram will show the results in correlation to gender. Decimals have been included in the percentage scores to ensure that the scores are as accurate and representative as possible.

The first underlying hypothesis for the project is that the Surrey accent is changing and the changes are led by younger females. Non-standard variants are generally led by men, nevertheless, the non-standard variants investigated in the present study have spread throughout England, and experienced a reduction of social stigmatisation. The non-standard features L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence are even found in informal RP, and may eventually be included as new features of standard English, thus making the features more attractive to women (Wells 1982, 1991). Therefore, the hypothesis is that younger female speakers will lead these changes. The second hypothesis is that the non-standard variants are increasing among younger speakers, thus placing

the Surrey accent in the Estuary English part on the continuum between RP and Cockney. Lastly, given that Surrey is placed in the southeast of England, the third hypothesis is that the changes will be changing in correlation with patterns of dialect levelling. An increase of the non-standard variants will be considered evidence of Surrey partaking in the process of dialect levelling.

Based on previous research (cf. 3.2) the main expectation for the CURE-vowel is that that the CURE-variable will have lowered considerably from [ʊə] to [ɔː]. CURE-lowering is considered a well-established change, thus indicating that [ʊə] will be a rare variant. However, although I expect [ɔː] to be the most used variant, I also expect to find [ʊə] with older and younger informants. Some studies, such as Hannisdal (2006), show that [ʊə] can still to be found in environments with a consonant + /j/. L-vocalisation, though previously a stigmatised, non-standard feature, is expected to be found both among older and younger informants. It is expected to occur quite frequently with the younger informants. Although R-fronting has been ridiculed and considered a speech defect it has spread throughout England, and according to Coggle it can be seen as a feature of Estuary English. Thus, it is expected that R-fronting will be found in Surrey, although it might be one of the more infrequent variants. As Yod-coalescence is now considered a feature of informal RP, it is expected that Yod-coalescence will be found quite frequently in both age groups. Given the status of upspeak I did not expect to find any occurrences of upspeak with the older informants. As upspeak is a relatively new feature, I expected to find some occurrences of the feature with the younger informants. However, I did not expect upspeak to be a very frequent variant. For all of the variables it is hypothesised that, as far as gender is concerned, the females will be leading the changes. Socially, all variables, except for CURE-lowering and CURE-monophthongisation, have been subject to negative attitudes. This is currently changing, and today the features are generally accepted, except for upspeak and possibly R-fronting.

5.2 CURE-lowering

CURE-lowering refers to the lowering of the CURE-vowel /ʊə/ to [ɔː]. The result of CURE-lowering is that words such as *sure, poor, mature, etc.* are pronounced with the lowered variant [ɔː] instead of the diphthong [ʊə]. Lowering of the CURE-vowel has been characterised as a well-established change, particularly in monosyllabic words (Cruttenden 2008: 80). However, Cruttenden (2008: 152) mentions a third alternative, namely, monophthongisation of the CURE-vowel, meaning that /ʊə/ is monophthongised to [ʊː]. The present study initially aimed to explore the distribution of CURE-lowering. However, during the process of analysing the material, a third variant similar to the monophthong described by Cruttenden turned out to occur with such a high frequency that it was interesting to include it in the study.

5.2.1 Results for CURE-lowering

236 tokens were elicited from the younger informants while 234 tokens were elicited from the older informants. The data for CURE-lowering contain a total of 470 tokens. The aim of the present study was to elicit 50 tokens for each speaker. As CURE-words are relatively rare in everyday speech, this was not possible. The lowest number of tokens was 26 and the highest was 33. The total number and percentage scores for the age groups are given in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: CURE-lowering: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Younger informants		Older informants	
	N	%	N	%
[ʊə]	5	2.1	19	8.1
[ʊː]	123	52.1	90	38.5
[ɔː]	108	45.8	125	53.4
Total	236	100	234	100

As can be seen from the table, the informants have been divided into younger informants (aged 17-23) and older informants (aged 66-87). The table shows that [ʊə] occurs in 5 out of 236 tokens for the younger informants. 108 of the tokens were realised as the lowered variant [ɔː], and 123 tokens were realised as the monophthongised variant [ʊː]. Thus, the percentage scores are 2.1% for the diphthong [ʊə], 45.8% for the lowered variant [ɔː], and 52.1% for the monophthongised variant [ʊː]. In the age group with the older informants, the table shows that [ʊə] occurs in 19 out of 234 tokens. 125 of the tokens were realised as the lowered variant [ɔː], whereas 90 tokens were realised as the monophthongised variant [ʊː]. The percentage scores for the older informants are 8.1% for [ʊə], 53.4% for [ɔː], and 38.5% for [ʊː]. The overall observation to be drawn from the table is that both age groups still use [ʊə], though it is becoming a relatively rare feature. However, we see that while older informants have a higher distribution of [ɔː], the younger speakers seem to prefer [ʊː].

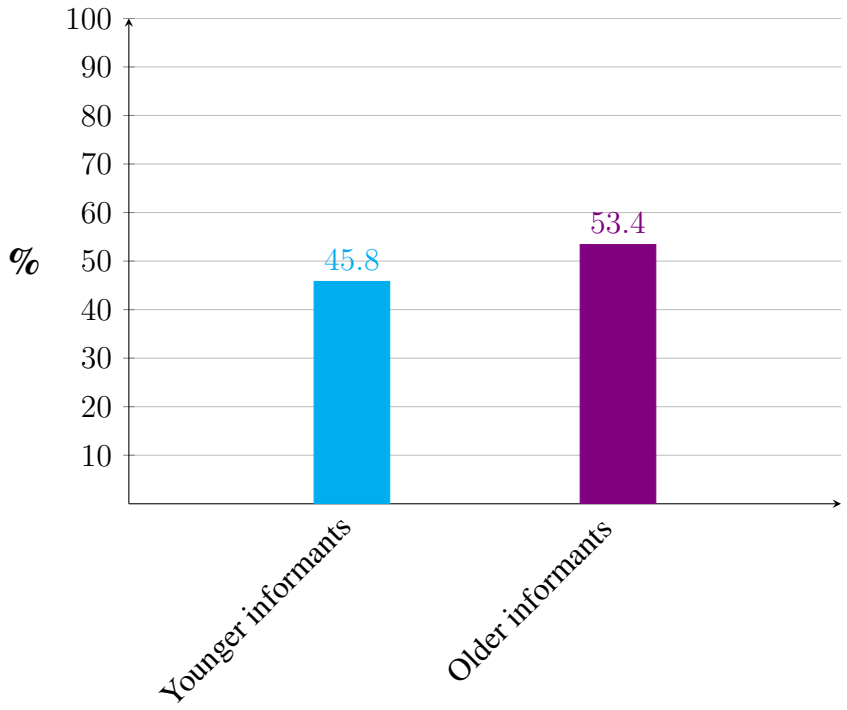

Figure 5.1: CURE-lowering[ɔː], by age

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of CURE-lowering when comparing the age groups. My initial expectation was that the lowered variant [ɔː] would be more frequent among the younger speakers. However, as can be seen from Figure 5.1, the percentage scores indicate that older speakers use [ɔː] more than younger speakers, with a difference of 7.6%. As previously mentioned, CURE-lowering has been described as a well-established change and the direction of change has been from the diphthong towards the lowered variant. There is no doubt that lowering of [ʊə] can be considered a well-established change, as it was found quite frequently among the older and younger speakers. [ɔː] seems to occur variably with the younger speakers. However, there was no variation in the pronunciation of the words *sure* and *poor*, as [ɔː] was used consistently for all 16 speakers. There was, however, greater variation for the word *pure*.

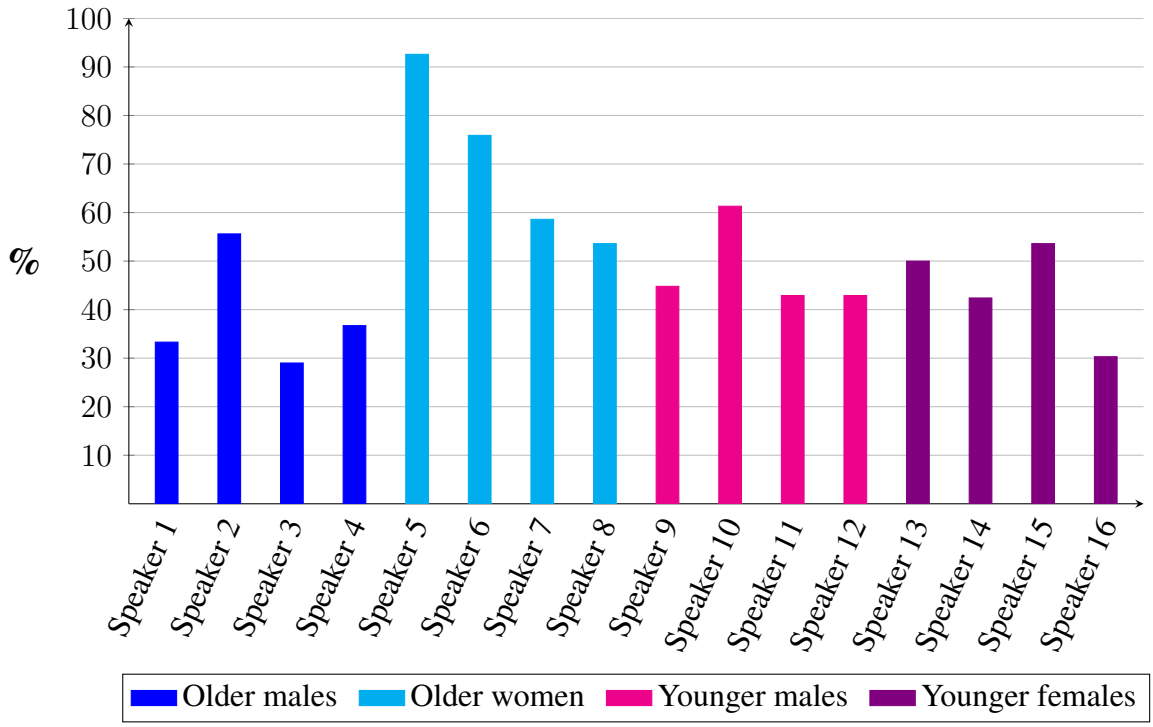

Figure 5.2: CURE-lowering [ɔː], individual results

Figure 5.2 provides an overview of each individual speaker's percentage score. The distribution varies quite drastically, from 29% to 92%. It is clear that older females have the highest usage levels for CURE-lowering. Older males, however, have the lowest scores, which indicates that gender might be an important factor to include. Considering that CURE-lowering is a well-established change, speaker 3's score is somewhat surprising. Speaker 10 stands out from the other younger males with higher percentage points than speaker 9.

As previously mentioned, my initial intention was to examine the progress of CURE-lowering. Although monophthongisation of CURE had been briefly mentioned by Cruttenden (2008: 152), I did not intend to include a third variant. However, during my stay in Surrey it came to my attention that monophthongisation occurs frequently enough to be worth including in the analysis. The results for CURE-monophthongisation have been plotted into separate figures mainly due to convenience, as it is easier to read the results from two fairly straightforward diagrams instead of one diagram with an excessive amount of information.

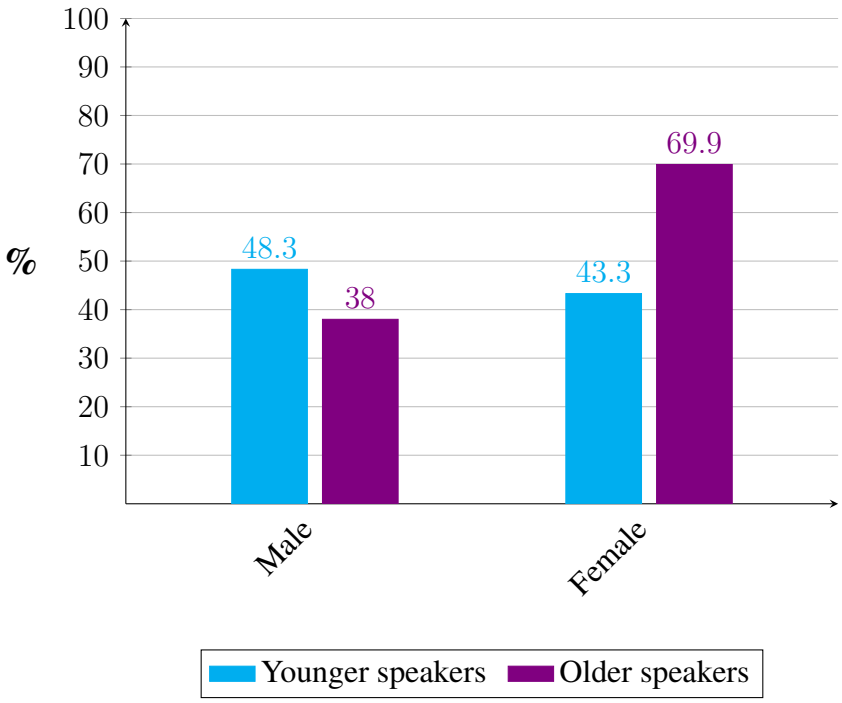

Figure 5.3: CURE-lowering [ɔː], by gender

Figure 5.3 illustrates the results of CURE-lowering in relation to gender. Older females are clearly in the lead of the lowered variant [ɔː], whereas older males actually have the lowest scores. The percentage scores suggest that there is little variation between females and males in the younger age group.

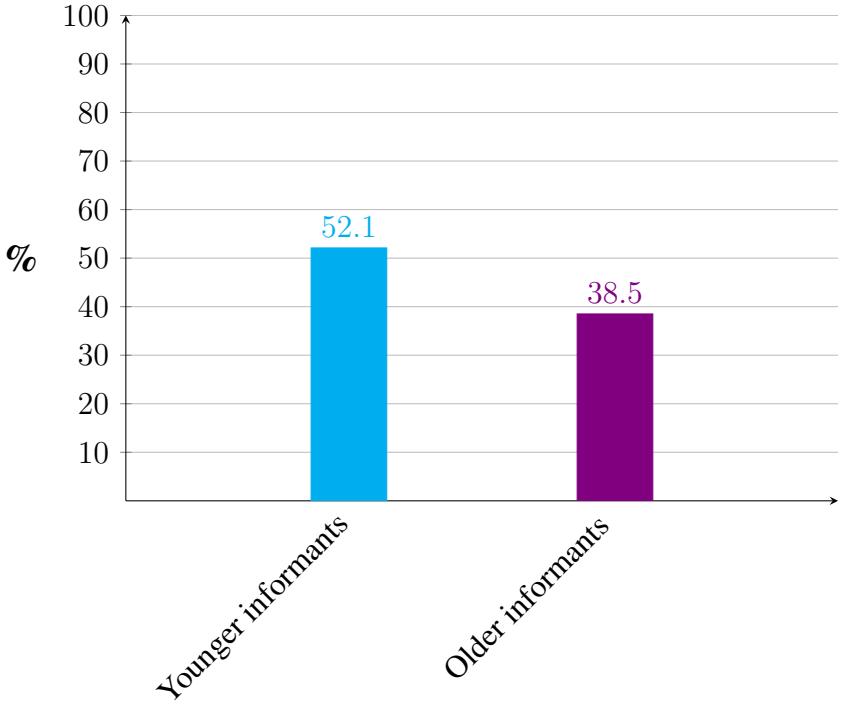

Figure 5.4: CURE-monophthongisation[ʊː], by age

Figure 5.4 illustrates the distribution of CURE-monophthongisation in relation to age. CURE-monophthongisation is the process where /ʊə/ is undergoing a monophthongisation to [ʊː]. With a score of 52.1% for the younger informants, the results from Figure 5.1 and 5.4 indicate that the monophthongised variant [ʊː] is slightly preferred over the lowered variant [ɔː]. For the older informants, the results were opposite, as [ɔː] was the preferred variant.

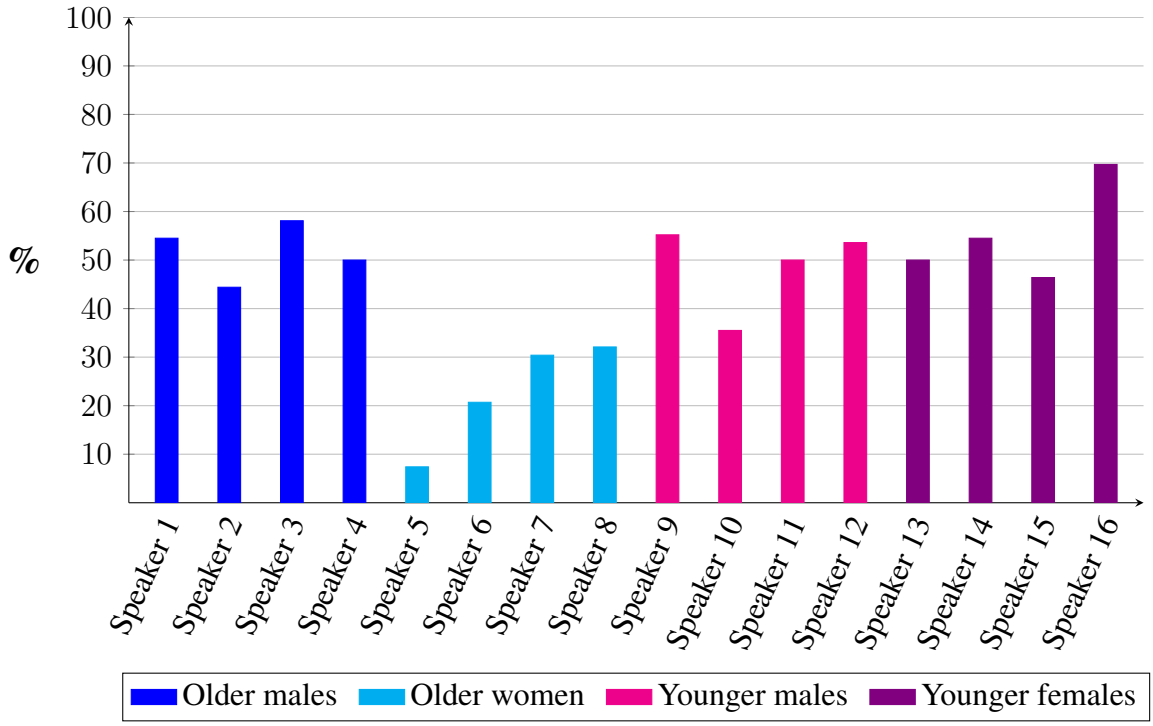

Figure 5.5: CURE-monophthongisation [**ʊː**], individual results

Figure 5.5 illustrates the realisation of the diphthong /ʊə/ as the monophthong [ʊː] with each individual speaker. It is not surprising that the frequency of the distribution of [ʊː] is quite low among the older female speakers, although speaker 5 stands out with a score of only 7.4%. Speaker 10 also stands out with a score of 35.5%, which is quite low compared to his peers. Speaker 16, however, stands out with a somewhat higher score for [ʊː] than the rest of the informants.

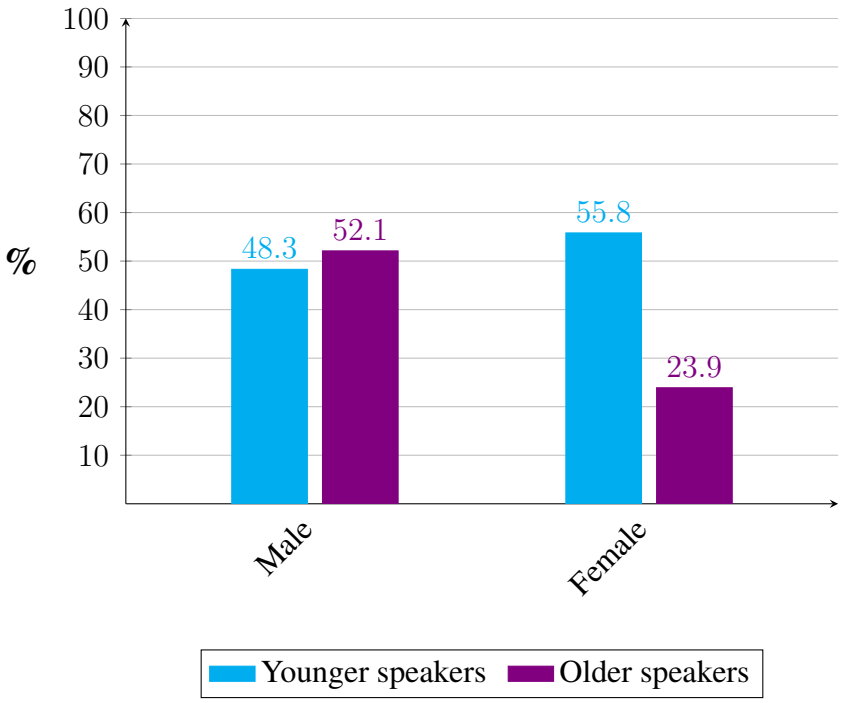

Figure 5.6: CURE-monophthongisation [ʊː], by gender

Figure 5.6 provides an overview of CURE-monophthongisation in relation to gender. As older females had the highest percentage scores for the lowered variant, it is not unexpected to find that older females have the lowest scores of the monphthongised variant. The results show that the younger females are leading the monophthongisation of the lexical set CURE, although only slightly. It is also interesting that the groups with the highest percentage scores are young females and older males. As older females preferred [ɔː], which may have been considered the more prestigious variant (see further 5.2.2), it is perhaps not surprising that older males preferred [ʊː]. There has been little research on the monophthongised variant [ʊː], thus, it is unknown whether the variant has any social stigma attached to it. The fact that the use of the monophthongised variant [ʊː] is increasing corresponds to the patterns of monophthongisation of the other centring diphthongs (see further 5.2.2).

5.2.2 Discussion of the results for CURE-lowering

As the results show, there is no doubt that the diphthong /ʊə/ has been subject to change during the last decades. The change has been referred to as CURE-lowering. The variant [ʊə] can still be found both with younger and older speakers, and in male and female speech.

The results do not correspond with the assumption that [ʊə] is more frequent in conservative accents. Although it can still be found, it is not as frequent as hypothesised. The lowered variant has not completely taken over, but it is certainly a frequent variant. My hypothesis was that the lowered variant would be the preferred variant for both age groups. The findings were expected to correlate with Wells (1982), Cruttenden (2008) and Tollfree (1999), who all claim that [ɔː]

is the preferred variant. This expectation was not supported, as my findings indicate that the monophthongised variant is preferred by the younger informants.

During the interview with speaker 10, 11, and 12, they were asked to read a text about The Cure, a British rock band. After everyone had read, speaker 10 made a comment to speaker 11 saying that 'I thought you were going to do something stupid like "the Cure was a band" and put some really stupid accent'. Speaker 10 pronounced the word *cure* as [kjɔː] with emphasis on what became a very salient [ɔː]. From the context, it seemed as if pronouncing *cure* with the lowered variant was something they would do when trying to sound posh. This is only a speculation, but if the use of [ɔː] is seen as some kind of hyper-standard, it would give some support as to why some of the older females had such high percentage scores for the lowered variant compared to the other speakers. Furthermore, this claim can be supported by the results for speaker 5 who had a considerably higher score for [ɔː] compared to the other informants. She was very much aware of the fact that she was being interviewed, and wanted to show that she could speak 'proper English'. The topic that engaged her the most during the interview was the school system and how children today do not learn how to read, write, and speak properly. Thus, in light of speaker 10's comment on the pronunciation of [ɔː] and speaker 5's high score for [ɔː], one might speculate that using [ɔː] in CURE-words is some kind of hyper-standard. Another interesting observation in relation to this is that while all the older females pronounced *Europe* with the lowered variant [ɔː], all older males, all younger males, and younger females pronounced the word *Europe* with the monophtongised variant [ʊː].

Both Cruttenden and Tollfree mention that the CURE-variable may in some cases be realised as a monophthong. Cruttenden (2008: 152) refers to this as monophthongisation, whereas Tollfree (1999: 169) refers to the variant as smoothing of /ʊə/ to [ʉː]. The results found in the present study suggest that CURE-monphthongisation might be an incoming variant. Phonetic environment was considered carefully when the reading passages were prepared so that there would be words with a preceding /j/ such as *cure, pure, fury, etc.*, and words without a preceding /j/ such as *poor, tour, sure, etc*. Words without a preceding /j/ were predicted to be realised with the lowered variant [ɔː], as these are generally the first words to undergo the change. Words with a preceding /j/, on the other hand, were predicted to be realised with a greater variation between the variants. However, there was little variation among the younger speakers, as [ʊː] was the most frequent variant in words with a preceding /j/. Out of a total of 236 only 5 tokens were realised as [ʊə] among the younger speakers, the results indicate that the monophthong [ʊː] has taken over for [ʊə] in environments with a preceding /j/. The younger speakers, especially the females, were quite consistent in their use of [ʊː] as the variant was also pronounced in words without a preceding /j/ such as *insurance*, as well as in words with a preceding /j/, such as *cure*.

Compared to other studies in the southeast, monophthongisation is perhaps not unexpected. Tollfree (1999: 169) refers to other centring diphthongs such as the SQUARE-vowel and NEAR-vowel as having monophthongal variants. One of the signs that an accent is taking part in the process of dialect levelling in southeastern England, is fronting of certain vowels. In their study

of the ongoing process of dialect levelling in southeastern England, Torgersen & Kerswill (2004) found that the lexical sets FOOT and KIT were realised with a more fronted quality. Other vowels that have been found to be fronted are the GOOSE-vowel and the GOAT-vowel. As these vowels have experienced fronting it is not unreasonable to assume that the CURE-vowel may experience monophthongisation and/or fronting. This will, however, require a more thorough investigation. If CURE-monophthongisation is recognised as a new, incoming variant, the results can be said to follow a pattern where younger speakers, and especially younger females, are leading the change.

5.3 L-vocalisation

L-vocalisation refers to the realisation of /l/ as [ʊ] in non-prevocalic environments. This means that words such as *help, fell, film, etc.* are pronounced with [ʊ] instead of [ɬ]. L-vocalisation has become a widespread feature in all of England, and it is one of the established features of Estuary English. Today, L-vocalisation may even be found in RP in some cases (Wells 1994a). Since Surrey is so close to London, where L-vocalisation originated, and L-vocalisation has been found in RP, it is reasonable to assume that L-vocalisation will be found in Surrey (Wells 1982: 259). The focus of the present study is to ascertain whether the phoneme /l/ is realised as a dark [ɬ] or as a voicoid [ʊ] in non-prevocalic environments.

5.3.1 Results for L-vocalisation

335 tokens were elicited from the younger informants while 371 tokens were elicited from the older informants. The total number of tokens elicited is 706. As opposed to some of the other variables examined in the present study, relevant words for L-vocalisation are relatively frequent. Thus, eliciting around 50 tokens from each speaker was, most of the time, not a problem. The total number and percentage scores for each variant are given in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: L-vocalisation: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Younger informants		Older informants	
	N	%	*N*	%
[ʊ]	119	35.5	55	14.8
[ɬ]	216	64.5	316	85.2
Total	335	100	371	100

As the table indicates, the younger informants realised 119 tokens as the non-standard [ʊ], and 216 tokens were realised as the standard variant, a dark [ɬ]. The percentage scores for the variants are 35.5% for [ʊ] and 64.5% for the standard variant [ɬ]. The older informants realised 55 tokens as the non-standard variant [ʊ] and 316 tokens as the standard variant [ɬ], which gives a percentage score of 14.8% for [ʊ] and a percentage score of 85.2% for [ɬ].

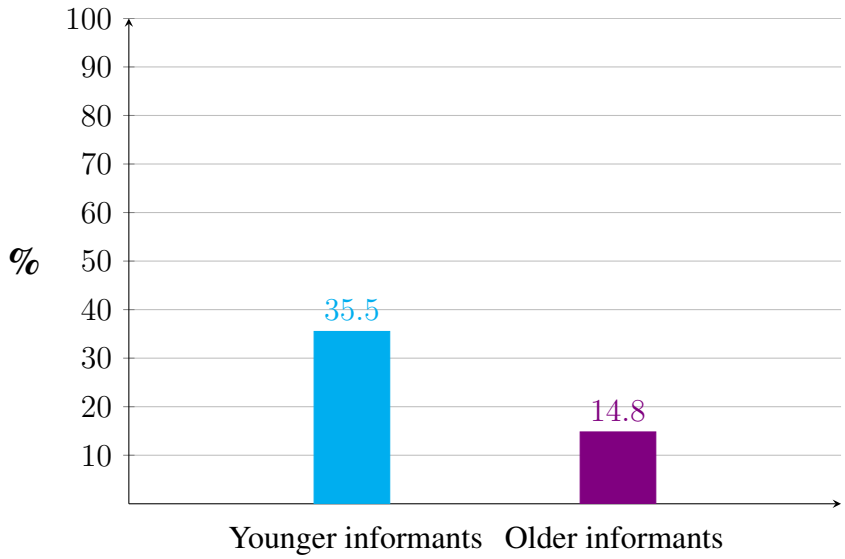

Figure 5.7: L-vocalisation[ʊ], by age

Figure 5.7 illustrates the percentage scores of the distribution of [ʊ] between the two age groups. From the diagram it can be seen that the younger informants are clearly leading the change as their scores are considerably higher than the scores for the older informants. An increase of the vocalised variant is not surprising, as the feature has been spreading throughout all of the UK. The scores for the younger informants in the present study correspond to Torgersen's (1997) results in his study of southeastern English. However, Torgersen found that there were little differences between younger and older informants. This does not seem to be the case in the present study. Whereas the difference between younger and older informants in Torgersen's study was 0.5-1 %, the difference between younger and older informants in the present study is 20.7%. Tollfree (1999: 174) also reports that the distribution of [ʊ] was higher in the younger group.

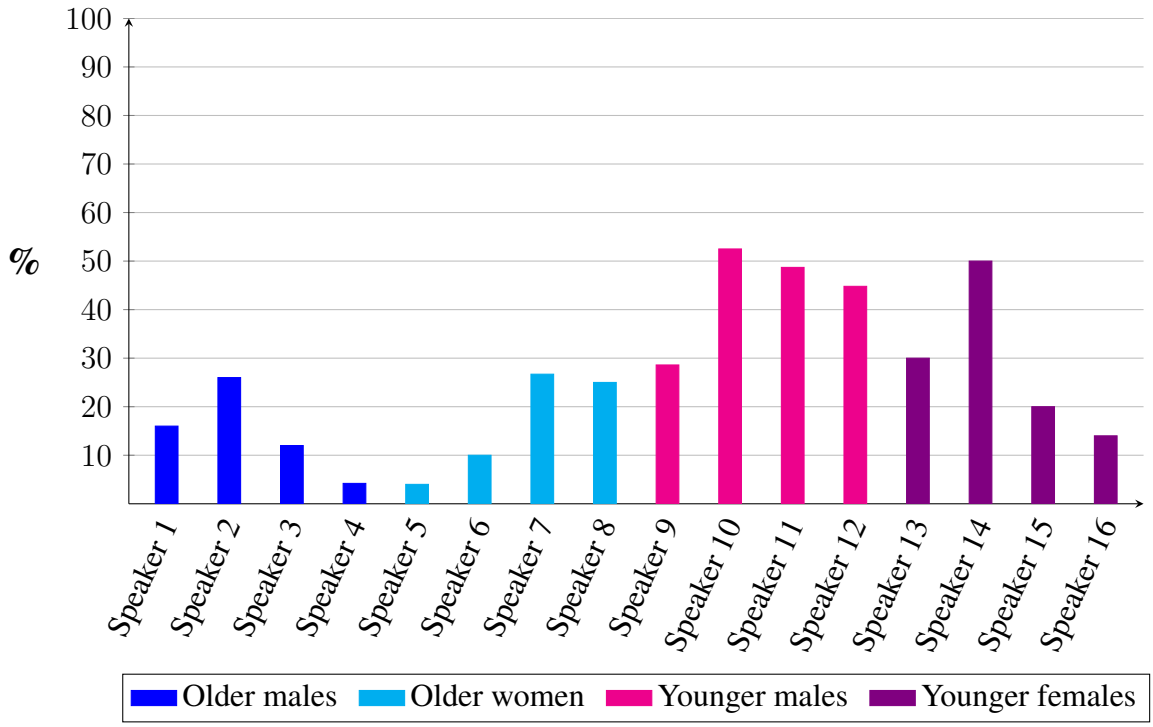

Figure 5.8: L-vocalisation [ʊ], individual results

Figure 5.8 shows the individual percentage scores for [ʊ]. From the figure we learn that there are great differences between the speakers. The results may be somewhat skewed as not all individuals produced 50 relevant tokens, while others did, but all speakers had 28 or more tokens. Speaker 16 stands out from the other young females with a quite low percentage score compared to what was expected. One reason might be that her mother is South African and her father is from another county in England. Speaker 16's results regarding the CURE-vowel did also stand out among the other informants where she had a much higher score for the monophthongised variant [ʊː]. Considering how widespread L-vocalisation has become, and that Torgersen did not find any great differences between younger and older informants, speaker 4, an 85 year old man, and speaker 5, a 70 year old lady, have quite low percentage scores with only 4.2% and 4.0%, respectively.

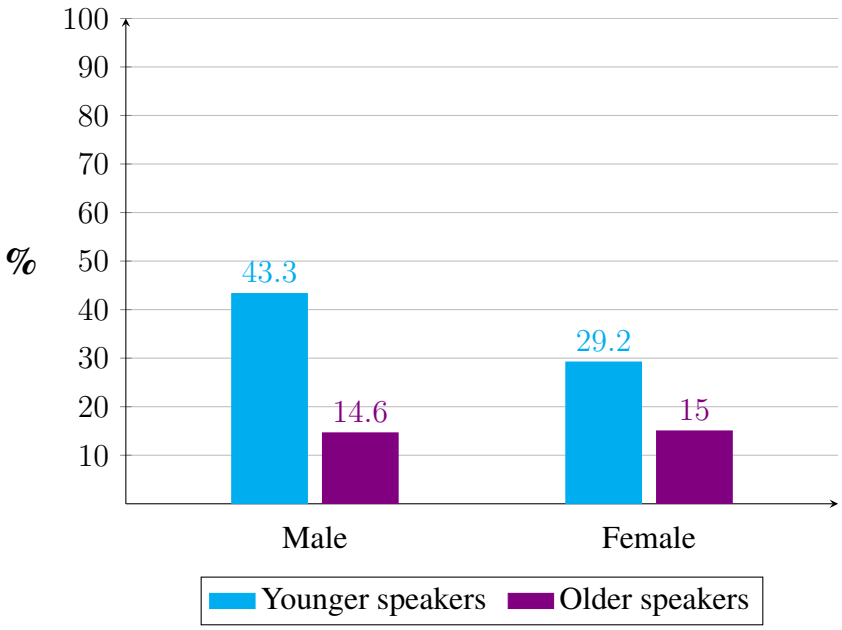

Figure 5.9: L-vocalisation[ʊ], by gender

Figure 5.9 illustrates the distribution of [ʊ] between the two gender groups. The younger males show the highest percentage scores of [ʊ]. As men tend to use more of the non-standard features, it was expected that the percentage scores for older males would be higher than those of older females, i.e. that the older males had been leading the change. However, the results show that there is no difference for the use of L-vocalisation between older females and males. Although L-vocalisation is a non-standard feature, L-vocalisation has lost much of its social stigma and Wells (1982: 259) has argued that L-vocalisation will be considered a standard feature in the future. Thus, the expectation for the younger informants was that the females would be leading the change. This does, however, not seem to be the case. The scores for the younger males' usage levels for [ʊ] are considerably higher than the scores for the younger females. The fact that younger males have a substantially higher score than younger females indicates that L-vocalisation may still be considered a non-standard and possibly still a somewhat stigmatised feature in Surrey.

5.3.2 Discussion of results for L-vocalisation

The results for L-vocalisation do not seem to correspond fully to the first underlying hypothesis, namely that younger females are leading the change. The results show that the younger speakers are leading the change. However, when considering the results in relation to gender, the results do not support the hypothesis. Rather, age seems to be the most influential factor concerning the distribution of [ʊ]. Thus, it can be concluded that younger speakers, without any emphasis on female speakers, are leading the change. However, the results do follow the sociolinguistic pattern where male speakers use more of the non-standard features than female speakers. Contradictory to the findings in the present study, Przedlacka's (2001) results of her study of Estuary English

suggested that L-vocalisation was led by females, although, she does mention that while women lead most changes, male speakers typically lead changes with a non-standard variant.

On the one hand, Surrey's reputation as being a quite posh area offers an explanation as to why L-vocalisation, which is traditionally seen as a non-standard feature, has a fairly low distribution among the older speakers, and to a certain extent among the younger speakers. Whereas the older informants in the present study have a percentage score of 14.8%, the older informants in Torgersen's study (1997) had a score of 25.3%. This gives the impression that L-vocalisation might be more stigmatised in Surrey than in the neighbouring counties. Tollfree (1999: 174) found that all her speakers used [ʊ] variably. Her younger speakers even showed some use of [ʊ] in word-final intervocalic environments, which Wells argues is impossible. As opposed to the present study, both Torgersen and Tollfree found that there were small differences between their age groups. Tollfree does not comment on her results other than saying that the differences between the age groups were small, whereas Torgersen (1997: 26) states that the percentage scores for [ʊ] were 26.1% for the younger informants and 25.3% for the older informants. In their study of Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull, Williams & Kerswill (1999) found that [ʊ] occurs variably.

One of the research questions aims to see where the Surrey accent could be found on the continuum between RP and Cockney. The scores in the present study indicate that the Surrey accent still might be closer to the Near-RP end of the continuum than the Cockney end, at least when it comes to L-vocalisation. This is supported by Przedlacka's (2001: 46) findings. She concludes that her informants from Surrey used the traditional, local variant.

On the other hand, it is somewhat surprising that the distribution of [ʊ] is not higher given that Surrey is so close to London, where L-vocalisation originated. Especially today, with the increased mobility, the increased commuting to London, L-vocalisation being allowed on TV-shows, and even celebrities having occurrences of L-vocalisation, it is natural to assume that the county closest to London would be highly influenced by the feature. Wells (1982: 259) even argues that L-vocalisation might become a feature of standard English, due to loss of social stigma. However, the fact that L-vocalisation is led by males indicates that L-vocalisation has not reached a status as a mainstream feature such as T-glottaling. T-glottaling used to be a stigmatised feature, but it has now become a mainstream feature, at least outside of Surrey.

The increasing use of [ʊ] correlates with the patterns of the regional dialect levelling. As one can learn from the previous studies mentioned above, the tendency is that L-vocalisation is increasing and spreading throughout England. The increasing use of L-vocalisation can be seen as evidence of Surrey taking part in the process of dialect levelling and becoming more similar to other accents throughout England. Thus, the hypothesis regarding L-vocalisation in relation to dialect levelling is supported by the findings in the present study. Przedlacka (2001: 47) argues that while it is likely that the levelling process is influencing the home counties, there are still quite important disparities between the different home counties.

The extra-linguistic variable class was, due to limited time and space, not included in the present study. Przedlacka did, however, compare middle-class speakers and working-class speak-

ers. Her results suggested that there was a clear correlation between class and the distribution of the vocalised variant. The present study has only investigated lower-middle class speakers, which may be one of the reasons for the somewhat low scores for [ʊ], especially for the younger females. Compared to Przedlacka's results, the fact that only one class was examined in the present study might have been an influential factor. It would therefore be of interest to conduct a more thorough study that included class as an extra-linguistic variable as well, even though class has been considered less important when it comes to language change (Przedlacka 2001: 47). Nødtvedt (2011) examined L-vocalisation in his investigation of the Cockney accent. He found that both age groups and gender groups had average percentage scores over 60% for the vocalised variant. Again, as Surrey is close to London geographically one might have expected the results to be more similar. However, given that Nødtvedt examined the working-class, whereas the present study has examined the lower-middle class, it is not unreasonable that the results differ.

Altendorf (2003: 95) found that L-vocalisation was near-categorical in female middle-class accents in Colchester, Canterbury, and London. Her study is not directly comparable, as she did not include male speakers. However, it does give an indication to the situation regarding female speakers. Altendorf (2003: 96) further refers to Torgersen's study (1997) where his informants in London and Essex had higher scores for L-vocalisation than the informants in Kent. The percentage scores for L-vocalisation in Surrey were around 30% (Torgersen 1997: 33).

5.4 R-fronting

The phoneme /r/ has traditionally in English been realised as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ]. R-fronting refers to the realisation of [r] as a labiodental approximant [ʋ]. Previously, R-fronting was seen as a speech defect or considered an infantilism. As R-fronting has spread and become more frequent, the social stigma attached to R-fronting has decreased slightly, and it has become more accepted in non-standard accents. Coggle (1993: 48) recognises R-fronting as a feature of Estuary English. Rosewarne (1994: 6) provides a definition of the /r/ found in Estuary English. Although he does not explicitly refer to it as R-fronting, his examples refer to people who are known to use the feature. Wells (1994), however, does not list R-fronting as a feature of Estuary English. The present study focuses on whether the phoneme /r/ is realised as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] or a labiodental approximant [ʋ] in word intial and intervocalic environments.

5.4.1 Results for R-fronting

The data for R-fronting contain a total of 800 tokens. 400 tokens were elicited from the younger informants, and 400 tokens were elicited from older informants. As with L-vocalisation, the phoneme /r/ occurs quite frequently in everyday language and 50 tokens were easily elicited from each speaker. The total number and percentage scores are provided below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: R-fronting: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Younger informants		Older informants	
	N	%	*N*	%
[ɹ]	391	97.8	396	99.0
[ʋ]	9	2.3	4	1.0
Total	400	100	400	100

According to the results described in Table 5.3, R-fronting has not reached Surrey yet. 391 of the tokens elicited from the younger informants were pronounced with the post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] whereas 9 tokens were pronounced with the labiodental approximant [ʋ]. This gives average percentage scores of 97.8% and 2.3%, respectively. 396 of the tokens elicited from the older informants were realised as [ɹ] while 4 tokens were realised as [ʋ]. This gives percentage scores of 99% and 1%, respectively.

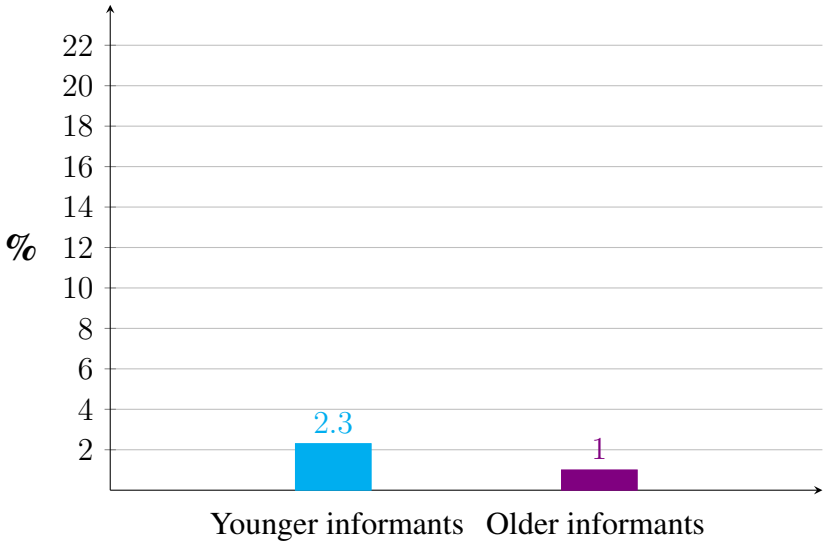

Figure 5.10: R-fronting[**ʋ**], by age

Figure 5.10 illustrates the distribution of [ʋ] when the two age groups are compared. It is evident that the distribution of [ʋ] is very low and almost non-existent. The results are so low that one can hardly discuss R-fronting as an ongoing change in Surrey. The few realisations of [ʋ] *may*, however, signal the start of a change. The occurrences of R-fronting in the older age group are most likely an idiosyncratic feature or a speech defect of speaker 6. Thus, one cannot really argue that R-fronting was found among the older informants. The scores are slightly higher and more evenly distributed for the younger informants. This suggests that what we see is the very start of a change led by younger informants. However, the scores are so low that any clear cut assumptions cannot be made. To determine if the occurrences of R-fronting in the present study

were the results of speech impediments or sloppy speech, or if R-fronting is slowly entering the Surrey accent, further research is required.

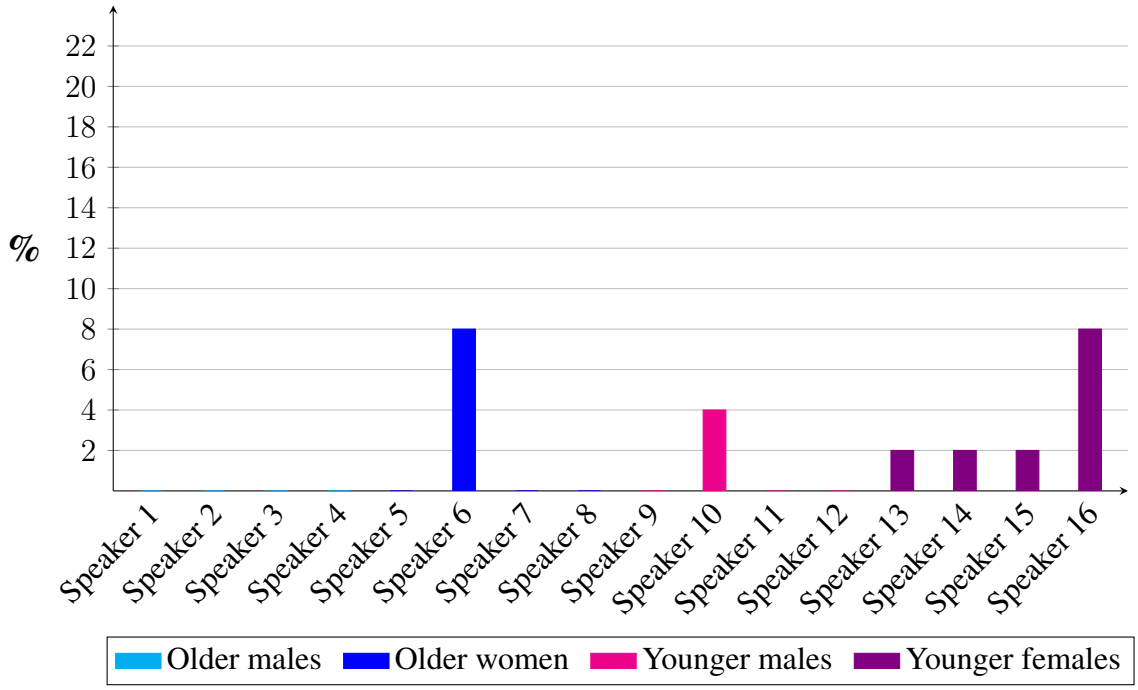

Figure 5.11: R-fronting[ʊ], individual results

Figure 5.11 provides the percentage scores for the individual speakers. Speaker 6, a 66 year old lady, displays some use of the labiodental variant [ʋ]. The four tokens give her a percentage score of 8%. Speaker 16, who is the youngest speaker, has the same score as speaker 6, i.e. four tokens and a percentage score of 8%. Speaker 13, 14 and 15 had one occurrence each of the labiodental variant. Speaker 10 had two realisations of the labiodental variant. This gives him a percentage score of 4%. Speaker 10 is currently studying at a university in West Sussex, which may have influenced him, as none of his friends had any labiodental realisations.

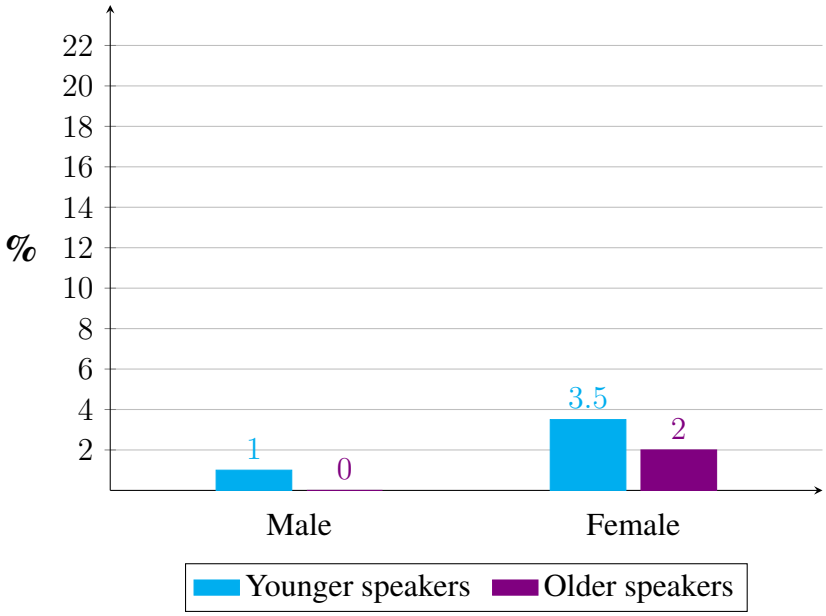

Figure 5.12: R-fronting[ʊ], by gender

Figure 5.12 illustrates the distribution of [ʊ] in relation to gender. R-fronting was primarily found among females in the few cases where R-fronting was observed, thus, gender seems to be inferior to the extra-linguistic variable age.

5.4.2 Discussion of results for R-fronting

Tollfree (1999: 174) found that many of her informants had a variable use of the labiodental variant, while four younger informants displayed a consistent use of [ʊ]. Williams & Kerswill's (1999: 147) results showed that [ɹ] was the most used variant in all three places. Although the post-alveolar variant was the main variant, their results also suggested that [ʊ] was common among children and young adults (ibid.). According to the previously mentioned studies, age seems to have been the most important factor in the case of R-fronting. The results for the labiodental variant [ʊ] in the present study differ from previous studies as the use of [ʊ] can hardly be considered variable. Rather, one may argue that [ɹ] is used consistently.

The case that stands out the most is that of speaker 6. Considering her age (she did not have children, nor had she lived outside of Surrey) her tokens of R-fronting are most likely a minor speech defect, or perhaps a consequence of being nervous during the interview. Being nervous may have a negative effect on speech quality by influencing the speakers' ability to speak clearly. In the case of speaker 10, the interview was conducted at a pub where he was celebrating his birthday with two friends, namely speaker 11 and 12. During the interview, two other men and a woman joined them. Although their speech was not actually analysed, their speech was recorded and listened through several times. None of them had any salient occurrences of the labiodental variant. Speaker 10, on the other hand, had two occurrences, to which his friends did not react.

The results for R-fronting clearly show that R-fronting has not really reached Surrey. Although there are four young girls and one young man who show some use of R-fronting, it is not

enough to state that R-fronting occurs even variably in the Surrey accent. As with L-vocalisation, this is a feature that has been seen as non-prestigious, perhaps even more so than L-vocalisation. R-fronting has also been subject to ridicule, and considered a speech impediment. It is, therefore, not unexpected to find low scores in one of the most posh areas in England. In the case of R-fronting neither of my hypotheses can be said to be supported by the findings. Moreover, R-fronting cannot be said to be an ongoing change in Surrey. Although there were some occurrences of R-fronting with the younger informants, the results were too low to conclude that R-fronting is entering the Surrey accent. In this respect, the Surrey accent differs from Estuary English and Cockney

5.5 Yod-coalescence

Yod-coalescence refers to the process where the alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ + the palatal approximant /j/ are coalesced. The outcome is that words such as *tune* and *dune* are pronounced as [tʃuːn] and [dʒuːn]. Traditionally, Yod-coalescence has not been considered a feature of RP, though it is now recognised as a feature of informal RP (Wells 2008: xiii). Yod-coalescence is considered a feature of Estuary English. The present study focuses on Yod-coalescence in word-initial and word-internal stressed syllables. As Yod-coalescence is a feature of RP and Estuary English, as well as a feature found in Cockney, Yod-coalescence can be found in both ends of the continuum. It is therefore expected that Yod-coalescence will be found in Surrey. The tokens have been categorised as coalesced variants, i.e. [tʃ, dʒ] and non-coalesced variants, i.e. [tj, dj].

5.5.1 Results for Yod-coalescence

The data for Yod-coalescence contain a total of 232 tokens. As with the CURE-vowel, relevant lexical items do not occur frequently in everyday speech and eliciting 50 tokens from each informant was not expected to be possible. The total number of tokens for each speaker ranged from 13 to 17.

119 tokens were elicited for the younger informants against 113 tokens for the older informants. The total number of tokens collected for the coalesced variants is 97 for the younger informants against 51 for the older informants. For the non-coalesced variants, 22 tokens were elicited for the younger informants, while 62 tokens were elicited for the older informants. The total number and percentage scores for each variant are provided in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Yod-coalescence: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Younger informants		Older informants	
	N	%	*N*	%
[tj, dj]	22	18.5	62	54.9
[tʃ, dʒ]	97	81.5	51	45.1
Total	119	100	113	100

As Table 5.4 shows, the younger informants realised 97 tokens as the coalesced variants, which gives an average percentage score of 81.5%. The older informants realised 51 tokens as the coalesced variants, which gives an average percentage score of 45.1%. The numbers show that Yod-coalescence has experienced a great change during the last decades. Whereas the older informants show fairly even usage levels for the coalesced and non-coalesced variants, the divide is very salient among the younger informants with an average percentage score under 20% for the non-coalesced variants.

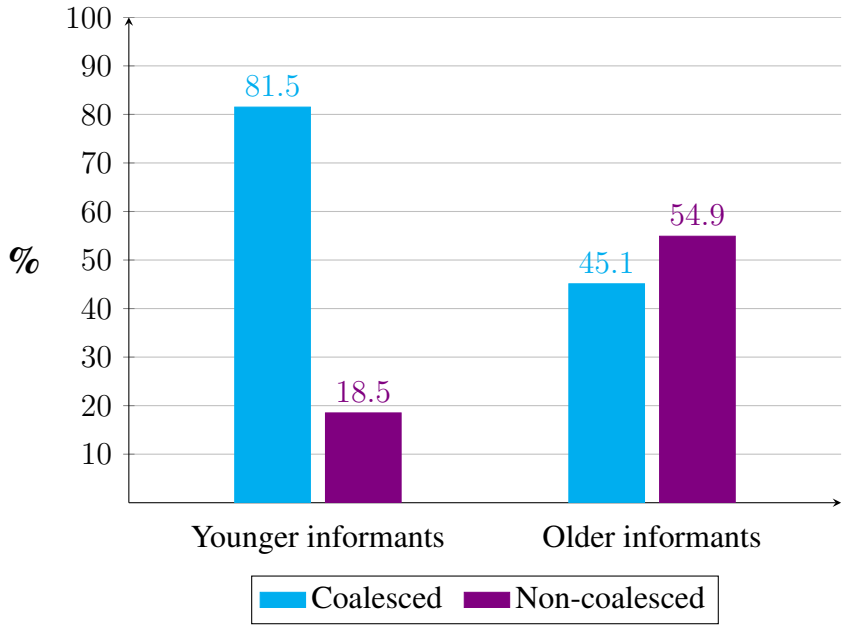

Figure 5.13: Yod-coalescence, coalesced and non-coalesced variants, by age

Figure 5.13 illustrates the development of the coalesced variants [tʃ] and [dʒ] in relation to the two age groups. As can be learned from the diagram, Yod-coalescence has experienced a substantial change over the last decades. The total percentage score for the coalesced variants for the younger informants is 81.5%, whereas the older informants have a total percentage score of 45.1%. Compared to the older informants, the younger informants have a higher usage score of 36.4%. Yod-coalescence has been an ongoing process in British English for a long time. According to Glain (2012: 8), the last 50 years have been the most important with the most dramatic changes, which is also evident from the great difference between the two age groups compared

in the present study. In her Master's thesis focusing on Estuary English in Northampton, Bonness (2011) found that Yod-coalescence has increased dramatically. Whereas the first generation she examined had relatively low scores for Yod-coalescence, the third generation had a percentage score of 89% These findings mirror the findings for Yod-coalescence in Figure 5.13.

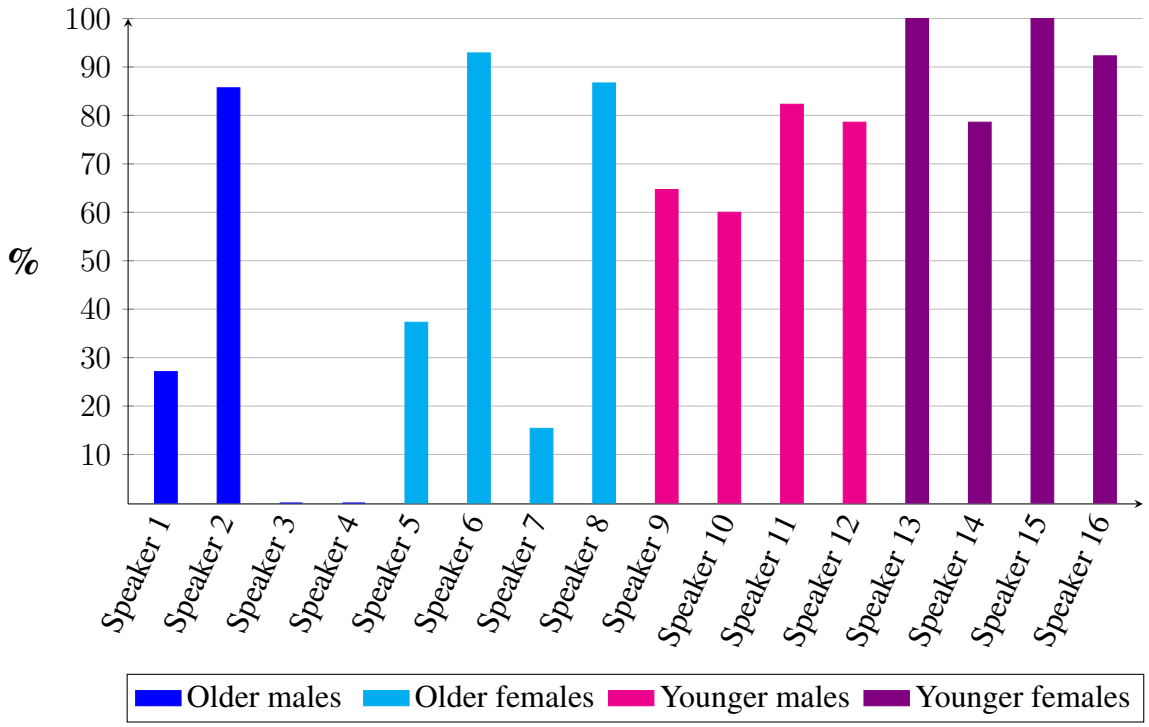

Figure 5.14: Yod-coalescence, coalesced variants, individual results

Figure 5.14 provides the individual percentage scores for Yod-coalescence. The figure shows that the individual scores for the younger informants are fairly similar. The results for speaker 13 and speaker 15 show no intraspeaker variation between the coalesced and non-coalesced variants, as they both have a score of 100% for the coalesced variants. The coalesced variants are by far the preferred variants, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that Yod-coalescence soon will be a completed change if the change continues in the same direction as the results in the present study suggest.

The results for speaker 3 and 4 were quite unexpected. They show no intraspeaker variation between the coalesced and non-coalesced variants. The absence of the coalesced variants may be explained by the fact that they were 87 and 85 years old, respectively. On the one hand, this supports the claim that it is only in the last 50 years that Yod-coalescence has really caught on. Speaker 3 and 4 would have been well into adulthood by the time Yod-coalescence reached its status as an accepted feature. Adulthood is also the period in life where people tend to use most standard features. Thus, the results should not be very surprising. On the other hand, according to Eckert (cf. 2.2.1), older people, especially male speakers, tend to increase their use of the non-standard variants more after they have retired. Yod-coalescence has also become an accepted feature during the last decades, even in informal RP. Yod-coalescence was, therefore, expected

to be found with all informants, at least to a certain degree.

Speaker 8 differs from the older informants as she did not produce any tokens of the standard variants [tj] or [dj], which was very unexpected. Thus, in addition to repeated listening and a control check conducted by my supervisor, I have had a third person listen carefully through the recording. Both of her parents were from Berkshire, which may have had an influence on her accent. Nevertheless, her results are somewhat surprising as she has been living all her life in Surrey, and she is over 80 years old. At one point during the interview, she made a comment about how she did not care what people thought of her and she would say whatever she wanted. That may be the case for her accent features as well, she might feel that being over 80 allows her to speak the way she wants to, not the way she is supposed to. This corresponds to the sociolinguistic theory where people who have retired tend to increase their use of non-standard variants, although this theory traditionally has been applied to male speakers (Eckert 1997: 165). Speaker 8 shows some intraspeaker variation as two of her tokens for (dj) are realised as the non-standard variant [du], commonly referred to as Yod-dropping. These tokens were grouped in the non-coalesced category, which explains why speaker 8's score is not 100% for the coalesced variants.

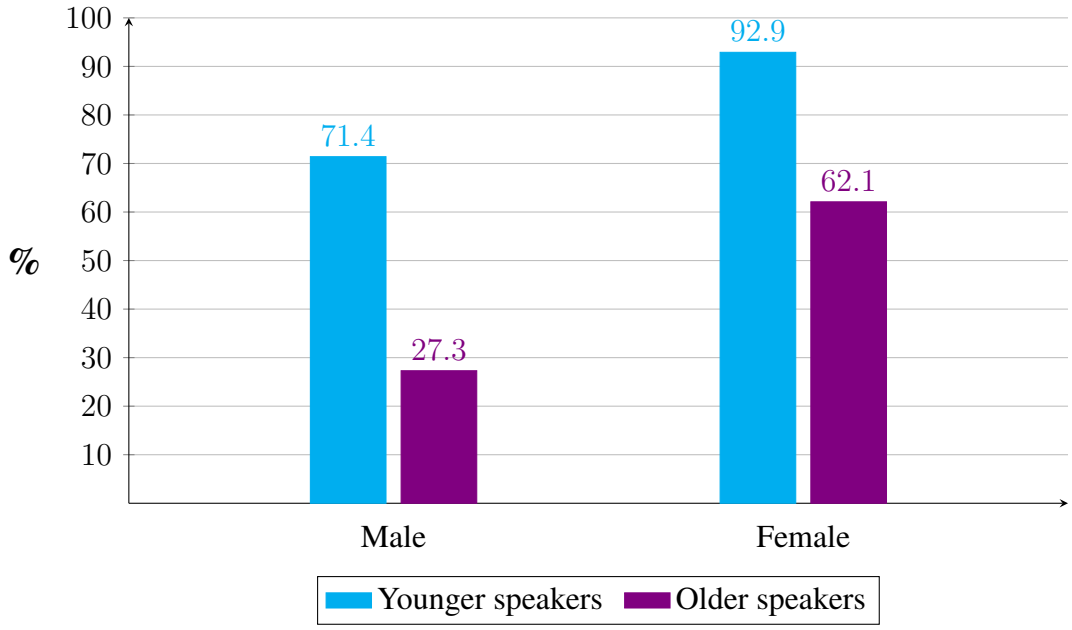

Figure 5.15: Yod-coalescence, coalesced variants, by gender

Figure 5.15 shows that gender seems to be an influential factor regarding the distribution of Yod-coalescence. The table suggests that the females in both age groups use more of the coalesced variants [tʃ] and [dʒ]. As there exists little empirical research on Yod-coalescence, there are only a few studies that are comparable to the present study. Bonness (2011) found that Yod-coalescence occurred with a higher frequency among females than males. While expecting males to use more coalesced variants than females, Hannisdal (2006: 215-216) found no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

5.5.2 Discussion of results for Yod-coalescence

Although there are many theories about Yod-coalescence, there has been little empirical research. Consequently, the grounds for comparison of results are quite small. The results of the current study have mainly been compared with Bonness' and Hannisdal's studies. Altendorf (2003) also included Yod-coalescence in her study of Estuary English. However, as she only included young girls, her study is not directly comparable in relation to gender and age groups. However, her results can be used as an indicator of the status of Yod-coalescence in Estuary English. Altendorf found that Yod-coalescence occurred with the middle-class speakers from Canterbury, whose accents are closer to RP than her informants from Colchester and London. She therefore suggests that Yod-coalescence can be found on a higher social level. Based on her findings, Altendorf further suggests that Yod-coalescence is part of a trend that is spreading regionally. As she found that Yod-coalescence does occur among middle-class speakers with a Near-RP accent in Kent, which is a neighbouring county to Surrey, it is not unreasonable to expect that the feature is a feature of the Surrey accent.

The results for Yod-coalescence in the present study corroborate the hypothesis regarding age and gender. Both age and gender seem to be important social variables. By comparing the age groups, we learn that the use of the coalesced variants has increased in the last decades. Hence, the conclusion is that the Surrey accent is changing and the changes are led by the younger speakers.

The percentage scores for the gender groups also corroborate the hypothesis regarding gender, namely, that the female speakers are leading the change. The coalesced variants [tʃ] and [dʒ] have traditionally been considered non-standard and have experienced negative attitudes. Linguistic changes concerning non-standard variants have traditionally been led by male speakers. However, in the present study the hypothesis was that female speakers would be leading the change. This approach was chosen mainly because although [tʃ] and [dʒ] are non-standard variants, they have been accepted as a form of informal RP. Consequently, the negative connotations have been reduced, giving the variants an overt prestige. This increases the likelihood of the change being led by females.

As previously mentioned (cf. 3.5) there has been an ongoing debate regarding the status of Yod-coalescence. On the one hand, Rosewarne (1994: 5) argued that the coalesced variants will become the preferred variants. On the other hand, Upton & Widdowson (2006: 63) argue that the coalesced variants will not replace the non-coalesced variants. The results found in the present study can be considered a contribution to the discussion in favour of Rosewarne. The results indicate that there is a good chance that the coalesced variants will become the preferred variants, unless something unexpected happens. By looking at Table 5.4 we see that the coalesced variants occur in 97 out of 119 tokens with the younger informants against 51 out of 113 for the older informants. Furthermore, the fact that two of the younger females had a score of 100% for the coalesced variants, and all of the younger informants had a score of 60% or more for the coalesced variants adds extra support to Rosewarne's claim. This suggests that it is safe to

consider Yod-coalescence as a well-established change, and an accepted feature among younger speakers in Surrey.

As with L-vocalisation and R-fronting, Yod-coalescence is considered a feature of Estuary English. Whereas the former variables had lower scores than expected, the results for Yod-coalescence correspond to the hypothesis, namely, that the coalesced variants are the preferred variants among younger speakers. The issue of whether Estuary English can be classified as a separate accent is not relevant to the present study, rather the study aims to see if the Surrey accent is similar to Estuary English, or if it is closer to Near-RP or Cockney. The results for Yod-coalescence are fairly conclusive, and show that Yod-coalesence is a well-established feature in the Surrey accent.

5.6 Upspeak

The phenomenon where the nucleus of a statement has a rise instead of the traditional fall is commonly referred to as upspeak (Wells 2006: 37). Although it is considered a typically Australian phenomenon, and in recent years, also a feature associated with adolescent American girls, it has existed for a long time in British cities as well (Bradford 1997: 33). The feature is somewhat stigmatised as it is seen as signalling uncertainty and indecisiveness. Because upspeak is a relatively new phenomenon, it is not expected to be found among the older informants. The focus of the present study is therefore to explore whether the phenomenon can be found among the younger informants, and if so, to what extent it can be found in Surrey. Also, gender, more so than age, might be an interesting factor to consider as research shows that female speakers tend to use upspeak more than male speakers.

5.6.1 Results for upspeak

The scores for upspeak have been calculated in a slightly different way than the other variables. Instead of including 50 tokens, I have counted every sentence that could be classified as final syntactically and as a statement semantically. All sentences that could be slightly ambiguous were excluded. Classifying stretches of speech as final or non-final may sometimes be difficult as the researcher can never quite know whether the interviewee intended to continue talking or whether the sentence was intended as an invitation or just a statement. By setting strict criteria for the analysis, the difficulties can be reduced.

The data for the younger informants contain a total of 1358 statements while the data for the older informants contain 997 statements. Out of the 1358 statements, 119 statements were classified as having a final rise. Out of the 997 statements for the older speakers, 4 statements were classified as having a final rise.

Table 5.5: Upspeak: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Younger informants		Older informants	
	N	%	*N*	%
Rise	119	8.8	4	0.4
Fall	1239	91.2	993	99.3
Total	1358	100	997	100

Table 5.5 shows the total number of statements and average percentage scores for upspeak. The table shows that the 119 statements with a final rise give an average percentage score of 8.8% for the younger speakers, whereas the four sentences with a final rise give an average percentage score of 0.4% for the older informants.

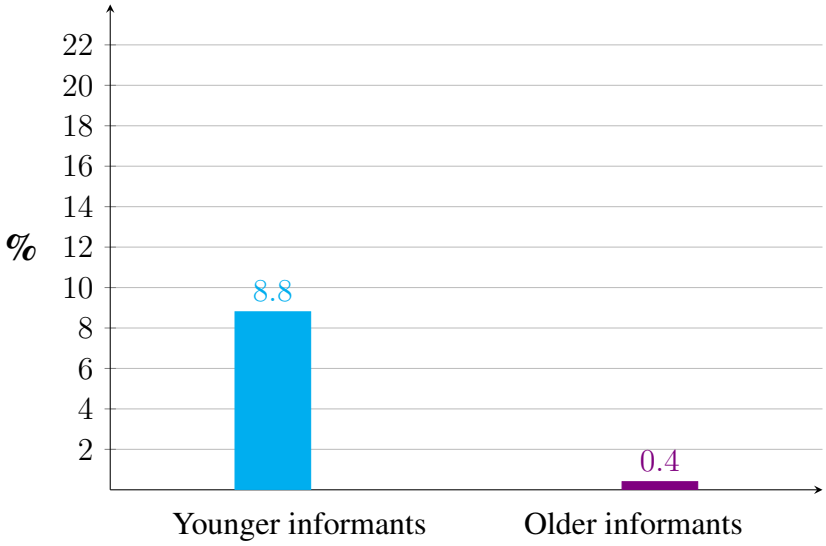

Figure 5.16: Upspeak, by age

Figure 5.16 illustrates the use of upspeak between the two age groups. The spread of upspeak has previously been documented in other British cities, which might support the assumption that the phenomenon has reached Surrey. The phenomenon is quite new, thus it was not expected to be found among the older informants at all. All previous studies show that upspeak is a feature found among younger speakers and considered inappropriate by older speakers. Thus, upspeak was expected to be found only among the younger informants. The results correspond to Bradford (1997) who argues that upspeak is found with younger speakers in several cities in England. The older informants produced statements with a final fall when they were telling me about their life, etc., whereas the younger informants were more likely to produce statements with a rise. For example, when speaker 1 told me a story about Godalming, he did not produce any tokens of upspeak. When speaker 15 told me about her job, she produced several tokens of upspeak. A brief comparison of the interviews shows that there is an incoming tendency for the younger informants to produce tokens of upspeak in longer stretches of speech.

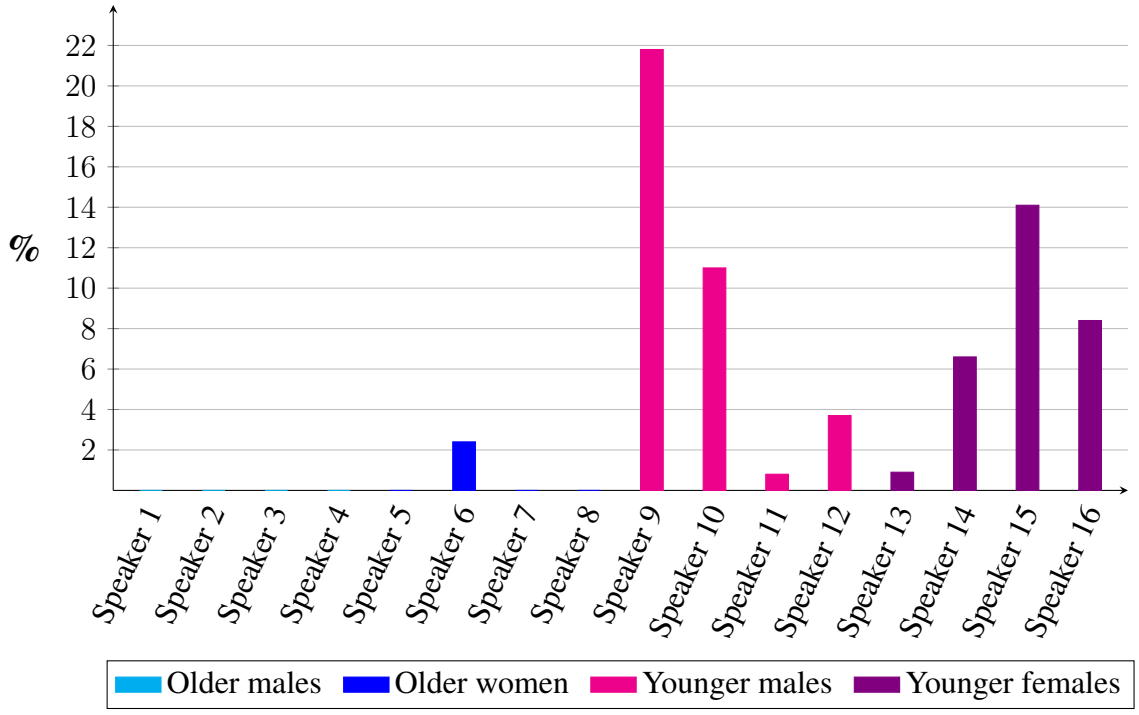

Figure 5.17: Upspeak, individual results

Figure 5.17 provides the individual percentage scores for all informants. Again, speaker 6 stands out (cf. 5.4.1) from the other older informants as the only one who produced any tokens of upspeak. This is quite surprising, as upspeak has not been documented with older speakers in Britain. Thus, her few sentences with a final rise are most likely a coincidence. Speaker 9 had quite a high percentage score considering that he is male. However, he has been travelling and working in different places all over the world for a couple of years. Consequently, he might have been influenced by speakers in other English speaking countries he has visited. Speaker 10, 11 and 12 were, as previously mentioned, interviewed together, and all had some tokens of upspeak. Speaker 13 and 15, had known each other for many years and were partly interviewed together, still there is quite a difference in the use of upspeak between the two informants. One possible explanation could be that while speaker 15 seemed comfortable and talked freely, speaker 13 was more withdrawn (see further 5.6.2).

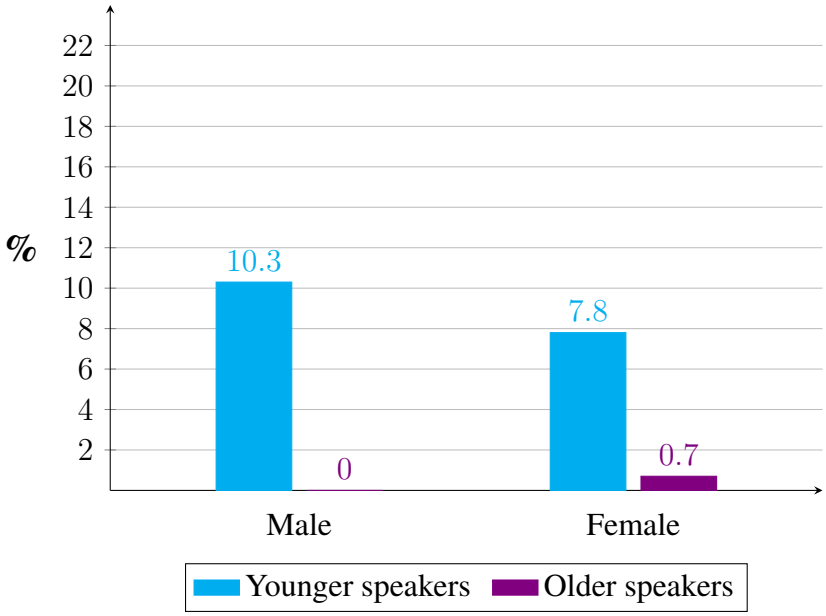

Figure 5.18: Upspeak, by gender

Figure 5.18 shows the average percentage scores for both gender groups. The total gender score is 4.3% for women and 5.1% for men. The scores are 10.3% for younger males and 7.8% for the younger females. For the older males the percentage score is 0% and for older females the score is 0.7%. The average percentage scores for gender do not immediately support the hypothesis that females are leading the change, as the males have a higher score. Upspeak has traditionally been regarded a female phenomenon, thus it was expected that females would have higher scores than males. Bradford's (1997: 35) results showed that upspeak is found more with young females than with young males. However, the individual percentage scores in the present study give a plausible explanation for the somewhat unexpected gender scores, which suggest that male speakers are leading the change. From the individual scores (cf. Figure 5.17) one can see that speaker 9 has a twice as high score as speaker 10, who in turn has a relatively high score compared to the other males. It is, therefore, not completely accurate to say that the young males are leading the change. The individual scores for young females show that upspeak is more evenly distributed among younger females than younger males. However, the results show that there are minor gender differences between the younger speakers.

5.6.2 Discussion of results for upspeak

The results given in the present study show that upspeak does occur among the younger informants. The four instances of upspeak found with speaker 6 were most likely random and a result of her changing her mind about what to say next, yet, her pauses were long enough for the sentences to be considered final statements. Also, she does not indicate any significant intraspeaker variation as the occurrences of upspeak were successive. However, intraspeaker variation can, to a greater extent, be found with the younger informants, although there is still little intraspeaker variation among the younger informants. Upspeak occurred several times throughout the inter-

view for the younger informants. Although the extra-linguistic variable style was not included in the present study, it is worth mentioning that upspeak was non-existent in the reading passages. Four sentences had been designed to elicit upspeak, but none of the informants produced any tokens of upspeak when reading the list of sentences or the text.

Both age and gender play important roles in regards to the distribution of upspeak. However, the most influential variable for the present study is age. Age as the most important factor is supported by Wells (2006: 37). In his discussion of upspeak, Wells (2006: 37) does not include gender. Rather, his focus is on age, and upspeak as a phenomenon found with speakers born in the late 1970s or after 1980. The results of the present study related to gender are fairly similar to the results found in Bradford's (1997: 35) study. Overall younger females have a more stable and even distribution of upspeak, though the younger male speakers are not far behind. Thus, the hypothesis regarding younger speakers is confirmed. The interviews with speaker 13, 14 and 15 were conducted in a pub, while speaker 16 was interviewed in her home. All of the younger females were completely sober and did not drink any alcohol. The interviews with the younger males were conducted in pubs, and all of them had had one or two beers during the interview, though none of them were in any way intoxicated or drunk. However, the frequency of upspeak increased as they drank. Having an alcoholic drink is often believed to have a relaxing effect, and relaxed informants are more likely to not be affected by the formal and somewhat unnatural situation of having a stranger record their speech. Hence, the everyday, vernacular speech may be elicited easier. Thus, it may seem as if upspeak is an incoming feature of the informal vernacular.

Other factors such as contextual meaning and topic of conversation seem to be quite important factors in relation to upspeak. In their discussion of upspeak, Tomlinson Jr. & Fox Tree (2011) discuss whether upspeak is used to indicate uncertainty or to indicate that the speaker cannot support his or her claim. It is also hypothesised that upspeak is used by the speaker to check whether the listener is paying attention (Cruttenden 2008: 289). The latter use of upspeak seems to be the most plausible explanation. The results of the present study suggest an agreement, at least to a certain extent, with this hypothesis. For example, the instances of upspeak increased when the speaker was trying to tell the other informants something, i.e. upspeak increased in longer stretches of speech. The interview with speaker 9 was conducted while a friend of his was present, and the interview developed into a conversation between the two young men. Speaker 9 produced several tokens of upspeak when he tried convincing his friend to read some books by a specific author. However, when the two young men discussed holiday targets, they produced less upspeak. The analysis includes several cases similar to that of speaker 9. The analysis shows that upspeak occurs in the Surrey accent. However, the main observation is that upspeak is still relatively rare.

Although I have not systematised the frequency of upspeak in relation to the focus marker *like*, I have highlighted all the statements containing the word *like* and briefly checked whether the statement had a final rise or a final fall. It does seem that young girls, especially, are more inclined to produce a final rise when the focus marker *like* is included in the same statement.

Statements such as 'you go and do the like touristy things and you don't really see like the crime and ↗stuff' were typical of the younger females, speaker 15 and 16 in particular. This is, of course, only a speculation since there has been no systematic analysis. However, further studies investigating upspeak might find it interesting to examine whether the use of a final rise corresponds with the use of the word *like*.

5.7 Dialect levelling

This section aims to tie together the results for the linguistic variables with dialect levelling and see whether the results can provide any insight regarding Surrey's participation in the regional dialect levelling process. Cheshire et al (1999: 1) define dialect levelling as a process where local features are lost and replaced with supra-local features. The outcome of the dialect levelling process is that it will be hard to know exactly where a speaker comes from because the accents will be fairly similar. Surrey is, as previously mentioned, a county where the average inhabitant has a steady economy, and the average person is relatively mobile. Surrey is also one of the most popular counties to settle down for people who are commuting to London. Based on these factors, the Surrey accent is an ideal source for studying potential levelling. Dialect levelling is a result of face-to-face communication and mobility. Commuters who are exposed to levelled accents on a daily basis are more likely to bring the levelled variants home, thus influencing their children or peers. Middle-class speakers are generally more mobile than working-class speakers, and the possibilities for dialect contact are much wider for middle-class speakers than working-class speakers. Several of the younger informants in the current study mentioned that they often felt too posh, which could be a bit embarrassing, when they spoke to people from other parts of England. Situations like this can easily result in the person from Surrey adapting his or her accent towards the interlocutor, i.e. downward accommodation.

In their study of dialect levelling in Reading, Milton Keynes and Hull, Cheshire et al (1999), investigated the fronted variants of the GOOSE-vowel and GOAT-vowel. The results for Hull showed resistance towards the fronted variants. The increased use of fronted variants in Milton Keynes and Reading shows a convergence in the south. Although the results found for the CURE-vowel in the present study do not correlate directly to those of GOOSE and GOAT, the increasing monophthongisation of the CURE-vowel might be the first step towards a fronted variant. A fronted variant was observed in the present study. However, the limited time frame of the present study did not allow for measurement of the exact vowel quality, i.e. measuring if the vowel quality was front or back. The general observation is that the monophthong is, most likely, a relatively front/central vowel such as [ʉː]. However, as Cruttenden uses the symbol [ʊː] and I did not have the time or equipment that was needed to measure the vowel quality, I chose to use the same symbol as Cruttenden (cf. 3.2). Measuring the vowel quality would have required the measuring procedure to be careful and systematic, which would be extremely time-consuming. It would also have required some instrumental devices. Including such a procedure would be

beyond the frame of the present study. Previous studies have shown that centring diphthongs are increasingly monophthongised. This is one way accents are levelling. Monophthongisation of centring dipthongs has been observed in various accents such as Norwich English (Trudgill 1999), South East London English (Tollfree 1999) and RP (Hughes & Trudgill 1996).

Trudgill (1999: 131) found that /əː/ was the incoming variant in the lexical sets NURSE and CURE in Norwich. He also draws attention to monophthongisation of the centring diphthongs NEAR and SQUARE, which he believes to have an /ɛː/ quality. The lexical sets NEAR and SQUARE are not distinct in Norwich English (Trudgill 1999: 131). Trudgill (ibid.) refers to the monophthongal variants as a result of smoothing, a term which is also used by Tollfree (1999) when she mentions monophthongisation of the CURE-vowel in London. According to Tollfree, the variants of /ʊə/ range from [ʊə] to [ʊ̟ː] and [ʉ̟ː]. As with Trudgill, Tollfree also mentions monophthongisation of the NEAR-vowel and the SQUARE-vowel. In their discussion of RP, Hughes and Trudgill (1996: 46-47) briefly mention monophthongisation of the SQUARE-vowel from [ɛə] to [ɛː]. Whereas Hughes and Trudgill's observation showed that the monophthongal variant is favoured by younger speakers, Tollfree's results showed that the older speakers had a higher distribution of monophthongs. Tollfree's results did, however, also show that the younger speakers had a closer vowel quality such as [iː] and [eː] with a slight off-glide. According to Wells (1982: 164), the CURE-vowel may sometimes be mistaken for that of GOOSE, thus, it is not unreasonable to hypothesise that CURE will follow the pattern of GOOSE.

As can be seen from the results of L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence, these variables have experienced a great increase. Altendorf (2003) refers to an increase of L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence in the three towns Canterbury, Colchester and London. Throughout the present study, several studies dealing with L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence have been referred to (Torgersen 1997; Tollfree 1999; Williams & Kerswill 1999; Przedlacka 2001; Altendorf 2003; Bonness 2011). What they have in common are the results showing that L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence are increasing, and thereby levelling the differences between the different accents in southern England. From the results in the present study, we see that the use of non-standard variants in Surrey is increasing accordingly. Hence, as far as L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence are concerned Surrey can be said to be partaking in the process of dialect levelling.

The increase of R-fronting throughout England has contributed to its status as a feature of dialect levelling, as it is becoming more frequent in several accents. Trudgill (1999: 133) refers to R-fronting as a 'remarkable change' as one third of his informants born after 1959 showed intraspeaker variation. It was expected that the scores for R-fronting would indicate an increase in the realisation of /r/ as [ʋ]. The spread of [ʋ] in England has been fairly rapid considering the stigma attached to it. However, the almost non-existent use of [ʋ] in Surrey shows that there has, most likely, been some resistance towards the non-standard variant. In light of the relatively quick spread of R-fronting in other areas and the quite slow, if any at all, spread of R-fronting in Surrey, we might expect a clear divide between Surrey and neighbouring areas.

It is evident that the Surrey accent is influenced by the dialect levelling process. However,

the results also show that although the accent is levelling, it is lagging behind in respect to some of the variables investigated. A thesis of this limited time and scope can only provide explanations and reasons in the form of speculations. However, one reason might be that even if the geographical placement of Surrey is ideal, Surrey has a reputation as a posh area to maintain. Whenever topics related to class or geography came up during the interviews, several of the informants mentioned that people from lower classes or people from other regions 'spoke sort of slobbish', while they themselves spoke 'proper English'. Attitudes such as this may not be enough to prevent dialect levelling. However, they might serve as an explanation as to why some of the non-standard variants have not influenced the Surrey accent to a greater extent.

5.8 Other observations

This section will shed light on observations made during the interviews that were not included in the analyses. These observations have not been quantified or analysed systematically. Hence, the observations may give some clues regarding the language situation in Surrey, but they are not intended to be absolute in any sense.

Coggle (1993: 48-49) includes TH-fronting, i.e. fronting of the dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] to the labiodental fricatives [f] and [v], as a feature of Estuary English. Wells (1994), however, claims that one of the differences between Estuary English and Cockney is the lack of TH-fronting in Estuary English. Since TH-fronting is generally not recognised as a feature of Estuary English it was not included in the present study. Several of the people I spoke to had some occurrences of TH-fronting. TH-fronting did, however, not occur very often. I conducted one interview (which was later discarded) with a man in his 50s who was a groundskeeper. He had quite high usage levels for TH-fronting. All in all, TH-fronting does seem to occur in Surrey, though it does not seem to be a feature that is generally accepted. Thus, the younger informants who participated in the study may have deliberately tried to avoid using the feature. During an interview with a 25 year old female speaker, a friend of hers told me how he had to change his accent when he moved from London to Surrey as a teenager (the interview was later discarded because she insisted on showing that she could speak with an RP accent). According to the young man, TH-fronting and R-fronting were acceptable features in London and he had never thought about how he spoke. After moving to Surrey, he soon learned that these features were unacceptable and he had to stop using them. He did not specify who had told him to avoid the features, though he gave the impression that other children had been teasing him for it, and that his teachers were not too fond of TH-fronting and R-fronting.

T-glottaling, i.e. the glottal replacement [ʔ], is also considered a feature of Estuary English. It was not included as a linguistic variable in the present study, as the feature has become widespread throughout the UK and accepted even in RP (Wells 1994a). Since there already exists a great number of studies that include T-glottaling, it was not considered the most interesting feature concerning the present study. T-glottaling was, not unexpectedly, observed in several of

the interviews. This was not surprising, as T-glottaling has become a relatively accepted feature. However, the attitudes towards T-glottaling were quite negative. The topic of T-glottaling came up during an interview with two female speakers who were in their 40s. They agreed that the 'spaghetti [spəˈgeʔi] sound' was horrible and they did their utmost to correct their children when they heard them using T-glottaling. Mainly, they considered the use of T-glottaling to be a phase children go through before they grow up and speak properly. The negative attitude towards T-glottaling shows how unaware speakers may be of their own speech as the two ladies had several occurrences of T-glottaling during the interview. Their occurrences of T-glottaling were mainly found in word-final environments, which are less salient than intervocalic environments. T-glottaling was rather rare in intervocalic environments. However, as the interview was not directly relevant for the present study I have not analysed the ladies' speech thoroughly.

During their discussion of T-glottaling, the ladies also referred to L-vocalisation and upspeak. The attitudes towards L-vocalisation were somewhat different than those of T-glottaling. Although they were aware of the fact that they sometimes vocalised their l's, they did not consider this to be as horrible as T-glottaling. Rather, when one of the ladies told an anecdote about how another lady had commented on how her pronounciation of *Paul* and *pull* sounded exactly the same, i.e. the words were pronounced [pʊ], they thought it was interesting and funny. Upspeak also came up during the conversation. One of the ladies mentioned that her niece had 'that Australian thing where they go up at the end of a sentence'. According to the ladies, this was 'coming in with the younger ones, and certainly the older ones wouldn't use it'.

The ladies did not fit the requirements for any of the age groups and were therefore not suitable for the present study. Consequently, they were told that the present study was investigating the Surrey accent. Two of the variables investigated in the present study were discussed in the conversation mentioned above. This was strictly coincidental, and I did my utmost not to participate or guide the conversation in any way, as I wanted their honest opinions about the language situation in Surrey. None of the informants who were included in the study knew the ladies, thus, there is no danger of them having told the informants what I was looking for.

Another feature observed by inhabitants of Surrey is the pronunciation of final *-ng* as -[ŋg] instead of the traditional [ŋ]. Most accents in England have NG-coalescing, i.e. the phonemes /n/ and /g/ have coalesced to a third variant, namely /ŋ/. Thus, words such as *ring, sing, etc.* end with a velar nasal [ŋ]. The observed variant is somewhat similar to *the velar nasal plus* that can be found in several accents in Northern England. The velar nasal plus is the addition of a velar plosive [g] after a velar nasal [ŋ] (Wells 1982: 365). In accents with velar nasal plus, words such as *ring, sing, etc.* end with a velar nasal and a velar plosive. Thus, words of this kind are pronounced [ɪŋg] instead of [ɪŋ], which is the traditional pronunciation in Surrey. The observed feature has not been analysed systematically. Also, it did not seem to be a frequent feature, thus the name velar nasal plus is only used here to describe the observed feature. Another possible explanation is that since Surrey is so close to London, the observed feature may also be influenced by what Coggle (1993: 50) calls the '-think syndrome' where *-fink* is used for -thing in words such as

something, anything or *nothing*. Again, these are only speculations and suggestions for possible explanations.

The [ɪn] variant of the *-ing*-variable is considered informal and a working-class feature compared to the variant [-ɪŋ], which is considered formal and used by middle-class and upper-class speakers. However, several of the informants who claimed to be 'in the middle' displayed use of the variant [ɪn] during the reading tasks, as well as in the interviews.

During the analysis of L-vocalisation speaker 14 had a few occurrences where she vocalised her /l/ *and* pronounced it as a dark [ɬ]. For example, the word *titled* was pronounced [taɪtʊɬd], i.e. a kind of middle variant. This middle variant was not observed clearly with the other informants.

5.9 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the findings of the analyses of the linguistic variables. It has aimed to present the results as accurately and clearly as possible by providing tables with the total number of tokens and the average percentage scores. Following the tables, two diagrams have been provided in order to see how the results correlate to the extra-linguistic variables age and gender. A diagram with the individual percentage scores was also included. Individual scores are useful as they show each speaker's results, thus allowing the reader to see if a speaker skews the results in any way. Individual scores were useful, for example, in the section devoted to upspeak where the group with the younger males had a higher percentage score than the group with the younger females. The individual scores showed that the group scores for gender were slightly skewed by speaker 9's high score for upspeak. However, the use of upspeak seems to be evenly distributed by females and males.

The hypothesis regarding younger speakers corresponded quite well with the results. The younger age group had a higher score for the non-standard variants for all variables, except CURE-lowering. The younger informants were expected to show a higher distribution of [ɔː] than the older informants, this turned out not to be the case, and a third variant was found. Instead of having higher scores for [ɔː], the younger informants had a higher distribution of the new variant [ʊː]. This does not correspond to the initial hypothesis, but the pattern is in line with traditional sociolinguistic patterns, i.e. that younger females are leading the change. The hypothesis regarding gender had a somewhat higher discrepancy in relation to the results. L-vocalisation did not occur as much as it was expected to. Nevertheless, it occurred quite frequently with younger males and females, although it seemed to be preferred slightly more by male speakers. In the discussion of R-fronting, the findings indicated that R-fronting may not have reached Surrey yet. This does not correspond to the hypothesis, which hypothesised that R-fronting had reached Surrey. Considering the very low scores, it was evident that it might be too soon to recognise R-fronting as an ongoing change in Surrey. However, the tokens found for R-fronting were mainly found with female speakers, indicating that a change will be led by females. Nevertheless, the conclusion is that R-fronting has not reached Surrey. As stated in the discussion of the results

for Yod-coalescence, the hypothesis for Yod-coalescence was confirmed by the results. Upspeak was expected to be found in the data for female and male speakers. However, as the individual scores indicated, the results for younger males were higher than expected because of speaker 9's use of upspeak. Although upspeak was expected to be found primarily with female speakers, the distribution of upspeak turned out to be fairly even between female and male speakers. Compared to Bradford's study (1997), gender does not seem to be as important in the present study. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that although R-fronting and upspeak are infrequent, the features may slowly be creeping into the Surrey accent.

Section 5.7 has dealt with the results of the phonological variables in relation to the process of dialect levelling. A short summary of what dialect levelling is was given before comparing the results of the present study to the hypothesis. Clear reasons for the results were not found. However, some tentative speculations have been provided based on statements from informants and the placement of Surrey from a geographical and social point of view.

Lastly, the chapter has discussed some observations that were not analysed and systematised. These observations cannot be considered as evidence of language change or variation in any way. Rather, the observations merely serve as suggestions for future research, or explanations of the already discussed results. These observations include, among others, a conversation with a man who explained how he had felt forced to drop his Cockney features: TH-fronting and R-fronting, and use the standard variants if he wanted to fit in with his middle-class peers. The section on other observations also discussed the language situation in Surrey from the perspective of two local women in their 40s. Even though they did not have any linguistic background, it was valuable to get an insight of how the local laypeople perceive the accent and their attitudes towards incoming changes. It was particularly valuable that they discussed two of the variables that were included in the present study.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary

The present study has examined five phonological variables. Four of the variables belong to the category segmental phonology, while the fifth variable, upspeak, belongs to the category supra-segmental phonology. The study has focused on lower-middle class speakers in Surrey (cf. 4.5). Since the study was an apparent time study, two age groups were compared.

An overall view of the results in relation to age suggests that the results are fairly conclusive, and follow the traditional sociolinguistic patterns. The hypothesis was that the Surrey accent is changing, and that younger speakers would be leading the changes. The hypothesis was confirmed for each of the variables examined, except for R-fronting where the scores were so low that it is impossible to know whether the few instances of [ʊ] signalled the very start of a change, or if the tokens were just coincidental as a result of other factors.

The overall view of the results in relation to gender is not as conclusive as the results regarding age. Thus, the results do not follow the traditional sociolinguistic patterns where the female speakers are leading the changes when the incoming variants are considered prestigious, or there is no/reduced social stigma attached to the feature. As seen in chapter 5, a distinction must be made in regards to the results for CURE-lowering. The results for CURE-lowering showed that the feature was found with a considerably higher frequency with the older females than the rest of the informants. CURE-monophthongisation, however, was found most with the younger females. The results for L-vocalisation showed that males in both age groups were leading the change. The few instances found for R-fronting were primarily found with the female speakers. The results for Yod-coalescence show that females in both age groups were leading the change. The overall results for upspeak showed that there are little gender differences regarding the use of upspeak. Upspeak is first and foremost known as a feature associated with teenage girls. It was, therefore, expected that the younger females would lead the change. However, the results indicate that although the feature is still relatively rare, it is evenly distributed between female and male speakers.

The case of L-vocalisation, however, is two-fold. On the one hand, the change was expected to

be led by female speakers because the stigma attached to the feature has been lost. Furthermore, L-vocalisation is a widespread feature that is spreading both geographically and socially. Such features are often led by females. On the other hand, L-vocalisation has not yet received status as a standard feature. Thus, according to the traditional sociolinguistic patterns regarding gender, it is natural that a change with an incoming non-standard feature is led by males. However, all in all, my hypothesis was that L-vocalisation would be led by younger female speakers. Thus, the results do not give support to the hypothesis regarding L-vocalisation and gender.

The general conclusion that can be drawn based on the results is that the features examined have spread to Surrey, except for R-fronting. However, the rapidity of the spread varies from variable to variable. The results for R-fronting *may* be interpreted as evidence of [ʊ] slowly entering the Surrey accent. However, if the few tokens found are interpreted as evidence of a change, R-fronting is spreading at a considerably slower pace than in the rest of the southeast. The results regarding the CURE-vowel revealed that the monophthong [ʊː] was the most used variant among all speakers, except older females. Based on comments by speaker 10 (see 5.2.2) and speaker 5's high score for the lowered variant, it is possible that [ɔː] is seen as a kind of hyper-standard. There has, however, been little research on the new variant [ʊː], and it is unknown whether the variant has any social stigma attached to it. The overall results for L-vocalisation among lower-middle class informants in Surrey showed that L-vocalisation was not as widespread as I had initially hypothesised. However, the hypothesis was supported by the fact that the usage levels for L-vocalisation have increased considerably when comparing the two age groups. In the case of Yod-coalescence, the overall tendency is a near-complete change. The results are close to irrefutable as the younger informants had a total score of 81.5% for the coalesced variants. The percentage scores for females were 92.9% for the younger females and 62.1% for the older females. Thus, the findings for Yod-coalescence give support to the underlying hypothesis that females and younger speakers are leading the change. While the results for upspeak corroborate the hypothesis regarding age, the results for upspeak in relation to gender are inconclusive.

The overall results, except the results for R-fronting, corroborate the hypothesis regarding dialect levelling, namely that the changes correspond to the pattern of dialect levelling. The process seems, however, to be somewhat slower in Surrey than in other parts of the southeast. Yet, the overall results indicate that the Surrey accent is participating in the process. As Surrey is, geographically and socially, exposed to different accents this was not unexpected.

Many of the informants asked why I had chosen to conduct my study in Surrey. Several of the younger informants then jokingly said that I had been wise to choose the best county in England. However, there was an underlying tone suggesting that they actually thought Surrey was slightly better than other areas of England. When I asked what they could tell me about Surrey compared to the rest of England, the general consensus was that Surrey had better economy, it was not 'dodgy' like other parts of England, it was posh, and they did not have any accent, they spoke 'normal English'. It was also mentioned by several informants that because of Surrey's wealth, people from Surrey were generally more arrogant and less friendly than people from other parts

of England. In general, the informants were very aware of Surrey's reputation. While some of the younger male informants were almost bragging about being from Surrey, some of the younger females were slightly embarrassed because they sometimes experienced prejudice and received negative attitudes towards their accent and place of origin. This largely confirms the expectations, and may be seen as an explanation for why the Surrey accent is more resistant to certain changes.

The overall results show somewhat conservative tendencies for the Surrey accent. The current study aimed at finding out where the Surrey accent could be placed on the continuum between RP and Cockney. The results for the variables investigated in the present study, suggest that the Surrey accent can be found somewhere in between Wells' definition of Estuary English (he does not mention R-fronting as a feature of Estuary English) and Near RP. Wells (1994: 1-2) claims that 'Estuary English ... is like Cockney ... in being characterized by tendencies towards, for example, [L-vocalisation and Yod-coalescence]'. However, these features are now creeping into informal RP, i.e. the features of Estuary English found in the Surrey accent are also features that can be found in Near-RP (Wells 1994a). L-vocalisation in Near-RP is, however, a slightly more moderate form of L-vocalisation than in Cockney, as the realisation normally does not involve lip-rounding. Consequently, we see that although the Surrey accent has increased the use of features found Cockney, the accent is still closer to the patterns of Near RP.

6.2 Conclusion

The present study has sought to examine the Surrey accent in relation to the continuum between RP and Cockney, and the ongoing process of regional dialect levelling. Moreover, the current study has provided the findings for five phonological variables examined in Surrey, focusing on the small villages in the Godalming area. The results for the variables in question have been discussed thoroughly, and extra-linguistic variables such as age and gender have been taken into consideration.

The thesis has conducted a study in an area that has not been thoroughly investigated, from a sociolinguistic point of view. Moreover, the study has examined a selection of phonological variables in the Surrey accent. This has given us some insight into the accent, and has brought us one step closer to a more thorough description of the Surrey accent.

In general, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is that the Surrey accent is somewhat more conservative compared to accents studied in other parts of southeastern England. Several of the informants mentioned that Surrey is a quite posh area, and that they spoke better, or at least 'normal' English compared to the surrounding Home Counties. Some of the informants were somewhat embarrassed by having such a posh accent. Although they all agreed that Surrey is a posh, slightly arrogant county, they also agreed that they were all very satisfied with living in a place that was not 'dodgy like other parts of England'. Attitudes such as these may serve as explanations for why Surrey has relatively high usage levels for the standard variants. However, the results show that the Surrey accent is taking part in the dialect levelling process,

and the non-standard variants are likely to increase as the accents in the southeast continue to level.

Lastly, the results in the present study suggest that the Surrey accent might be placed somewhere between Estuary English and Near RP, rather than closer to Cockney. This is, of course, only based on the variables Yod-coalescence, R-fronting and L-vocalisation, which are the relevant variables regarding Estuary English. The variables with the highest scores, i.e. those indicative of change have also been recognised as features of Near-RP. In order to get a more complete picture of Estuary English versus the Surrey accent, the other variables that are regarded features of Estuary English must also be studied. As RP is changing and becoming more similar to Estuary English, it is not unreasonable to place the Surrey accent in the middle between Near-RP and Estuary English.

6.3 Further research

The present study has revealed several interesting findings. Due to limited time and space, I could not include every aspect of the findings, such as defining the exact vowel quality of the variants of the CURE-vowel. This section will therefore provide suggestions for further research. The analysis of CURE-lowering took an unexpected turn as the results showed very high scores for the monophthongised variant [ʊː]. Whereas CURE-lowering has been discussed and examined by several linguists, CURE-monophthongisation has not received the same amount of attention. Further research could perhaps benefit from examining CURE-monophthongisation. In addition to focusing on the distribution of [ʊː], further studies should investigate the attitudes towards the variant, i.e. whether it is stigmatised in any way. Further research should also focus on establishing its precise vowel quality.

The focus marker *like* is becoming a significant part of the younger speakers language in England. Observations of the focus marker *like* in relation to upspeak seem to indicate a correlation between *like* and upspeak. The focus marker *like* seems to increase the frequency of upspeak, or vice versa, i.e. a statement is more likely to have a final rise instead of the traditional fall if the focus marker *like* occurs in the same statement. Whether this is actually the case, or if it was a coincidence in the present study is unknown. However, it could be worth studying further.

As briefly mentioned in section 5.3.2, a comparison of classes could be interesting in relation to L-vocalisation in Surrey. Although some of the informants in the present study had a score of approximately 50% for L-vocalisation, the scores were somewhat lower than expected. This indicates that class *may* have been an influencing factor. Future research should therefore include informants from the working-class and middle-class. Considering the wide-spread use of L-vocalisation and the loss of social stigma attached to the feature, L-vocalisation may perhaps have a wider distribution among working-class speakers in Surrey.

Features such as T-glottaling and GOOSE-fronting were not included in the present study. However, it might be interesting to investigate the distribution of T-glottaling in Surrey. While I

observed several instances of T-glottaling in word-final positions such as [bʌʔ], I did not notice any particularly salient instances of T-glottaling in intervocalic positions such as [ˈmæʔə] with adults. However, I did, to a certain extent, notice it with small children. GOOSE-fronting has also spread rapidly in southeastern England, thus it could be interesting to see whether the feature has spread to Surrey.

6.4 Shortcomings and limitations

Things rarely happen as planned, it will, therefore, always be some shortcomings in studies of this kind. The concept of class has always been important in the English society. However, in the last decades, the society has experienced great changes with regards to social and geographical mobility. People are climbing social ladders and moving around. This makes it very hard to establish clear cut criteria for defining classes, and simplifications are needed. Definitions and explanations for why the informants in the present study have been classified as lower-middle class has been provided (cf. 4.5), though the researcher is fully aware that these definitions are only valid for the current study. Nevertheless, the criteria were considered adequate for the present study considering the limited time and scope.

One of the aims regarding the informants was to find native speakers. This required the informants to be born and raised in Surrey. Ideally, both their parents should also be born and raised in Surrey. However, the researcher has relatively limited time to collect data and will often have to settle with what he or she is able to get. Mobility is an important factor concerning how it is becoming harder to find young informants where one or both parents have lived in the specified area their whole life. Several of the younger informants had only one parent who had been born and raised in Surrey and neither of speaker 16's parents were born or raised in Surrey. The informants can therefore not be defined as native speakers in the strictest sense.

The current project did not aim to include and analyse stylistic differences. However, it could have been useful to include style as an extra-linguistic variable in order to see whether there was any intraspeaker variation between the reading passages and the interviews. Including a systematic study of style as an extra-linguistic variable could tell us more about the status of the variants, as non-standard variants occur more in informal styles such as friendly conversations, while standard forms occur in formal styles such as reading tasks.

Initially, the study aimed to investigate the accent spoken by people in Guildford, Surrey. It would absolutely have been preferable to only include informants who had grown up in the same village. However, acquiring 16 informants from Guildford, who were suitable according to the criteria without any connections, proved to be quite difficult, and the decision to include informants from the whole county was made. By expanding the field, it became easier to find informants. Although the limits were extended to include the whole of Surrey, the researcher deliberately chose informants who had grown up in the same village or neighbouring villages, wherever this was possible.

6.5 Contributions made by this thesis

The main contributions made by the present thesis are the findings for CURE-lowering and Yod-coalescence. The thesis has drawn attention to a relatively new variant of the CURE-vowel. The new variant has been mentioned previously, but the distribution of it has not been examined thoroughly. The findings provided by the present study indicate that we may be dealing with a variant that may become a significant variant of /ʊə/.

The status regarding Yod-coalescence in British English has been debated by several linguists (cf. section 3.5). The thesis has made a contribution to this debate by disproving Upton & Widdowson's argument. Upton & Widdowson argue that the coalesced variants will not replace the non-coalesced variants because of spelling. While they do acknowledge the coalesced variants as existing and in some cases even to be the preferred variants, they also claim that because people 'appreciate that the word is not spelt with ch ... [they] are therefore reluctant to pronounce it with a [tʃ] sound' (Upton & Widdowson 2006: 61). Consequently, they claim that this gives us reason to assume that [tj] and [dj] will continue to exist. According to the results in chapter 5, we see a strong indication in favour of the claim that the coalesced variants will take over, and become at least a regional feature if not a universally British feature.

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Appendix

Appendix A

The Cure is a rock band that was formed in Crawley West Sussex in 1976. When The Cure recorded their third album, they were pursuing a career closer to a gothic band instead of a pure rock and roll band. Their first album was titled Three Imaginary Boys. In 1979 The Cure set out on a world tour. They covered an enormous territory in a short amount of time.

Despite the genre being somewhat obscure singer Robert Smith has been stating all along that the Cure is a gothic band but in later years they were seduced by catchy punk/pop tunes. After touring as a gothic band they found that they had reached a new level of maturity and wanted people to perceive them as an alternative band with strong hints of pop tunes. In the 90s their success became even greater and they received a reception that could be a duke worthy.

In his younger years lead singer Robert Smith was expelled from school due to his attitude towards religion. He had formed a band along with some other students but a song performed at a school function caused fury in the administration and led to the band members being expelled. As he was in no hurry to return he formed what would be the beginning of The Cure instead. Despite his lack of education he has sold enough records to ensure that he will never be poor. During their first tour Smith had to pull double duty each night. This helped develop his thrill for music.

In March 2012, The Cure announced they would be headlining a series of summer music festivals across Europe during the summer of 2012, including the Leeds/Reading Festival. They said that at the current time performing is enough and they feel no need to release albums. A number of films have used Cure songs as a film title. Allowing this is a good insurance for future income. The band has produced a number of music videos that can be found on Youtube.

Appendix B

1. I am sure he will contact you.
2. She is waiting by the shore.
3. I feel sorry for poor Leno.
4. The dog hurt his paw.
5. I had a heated argument with the insurance company.
6. The tourists are always so annoying.
7. The film was excellent.
8. It fell down from the shelf.
9. I always eat a tuna sandwich on Tuesdays.
10. Mountain Dew should always be served with ice.
11. Red roses are such a cliché.
12. She tried drinking Perry but the taste was too sweet.
13. The holy Bible is an old book.
14. The old American purposes are still wholly relevant.
15. He could not stand the noisy goat.
16. David Beckham scored the winning goal.
17. The goalie had no chance.
18. The child was walking slowly down the road.
19. I did my homework yesterday.
20. I started studying at the university.
21. Her goal is to be the lead singer in a band.
22. There was water all over the floor.